PT
2316
.A4
T6

HEINE'S BOOK OF SONGS

831.758
T56b

THE LIBRARY
BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY
PROVO, UTAH

HEINE'S BOOK OF SONGS

831.758
T56b

TRANSLATED BY

JOHN TODHUNTER

OXFORD
AT THE CLARENDON PRESS
MCMVII

HENRY FROWDE, M.A.
PUBLISHER TO THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
LONDON, EDINBURGH
NEW YORK AND TORONTO

THE LIBRARY
BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY
PROVO, UTAH

PREFACE

OF all Heine's works, the 'Book of Songs' is by far the most popular. It contains some of his most exquisite songs and lyrical poems, and some of the best examples of his power of dealing with a dramatic incident in ballad form; as well as many things much less happy in taste, feeling, and even in execution, which serve as foils to his more perfect work. Yet even in the worst pieces in this volume he usually remains a master of his craft as a lyrical poet. His verses go trippingly on the tongue, except when, as in some of the satirical Sonnets, he is wilfully uncouth, and seems with a cynical enjoyment to heap together all the most cacophonous sounds the German language can produce; and when, as in some of the 'North Sea' poems, the sentiment becomes *banal*, and the unrhymed lyrical metres approach perilously near ungainly prose.

It is wonderful with what endless variety of feeling he treats the main subject of the 'Book of Songs'—Love. Whether it be the love of a lifetime, or the transient passion of a day, the emotion, however complex in its blending of jest and earnest, pathos and mockery, is expressed in every *nuance* with a dramatic sincerity and simplicity of diction, in which every word tells, making the verse a living thing—vivid in feeling, and exquisitely appropriate in rhythmical form and cadence. This is

the secret of the subtle charm of his songs, which are often commonplace enough in their constant repetition of the same obvious phrases and rhymes, the same lover's 'little language' of affectionate diminutives, so difficult to reproduce in English without exciting ridicule. It takes genius to give a fresh emotional value to the hackneyed phrases of a valentine, to make its *hearts* and *darts* and *smarts*, its *blisses* and *kisses*, notes in a lovely melody that renews their youth. This is one of the gifts of the man whose humour had 'laughing tears for his bearing'.

Matthew Arnold, in that daintily-worded poem in which he seems to 'smile superior down' on *Heine's Grave*, suggests that he had *no* charm, because 'he wanted love'. What then, if not charm, is the quality in these lyrics of his which has fascinated so many people, cultured as well as uncultured, and inspired some of the greatest songs of modern composers?

The 'Book of Songs' contains Heine's lyrical work from his sixteenth to his twenty-sixth year; and, besides the more distinctly personal pieces, there are to be found in it many of his finest poems in ballad form, dealing with special themes: such as 'The Grenadiers', written when he was sixteen, 'The Message', 'Belshazzar', the Lorelei poem; the grim sketch of the family at the parsonage 'The Pilgrimage to Kevlaar', and 'A Mountain Idyll'.

'Ratcliff' is in a very different key. It is a gloomy vision seen by the melodramatic hero of Heine's youthful play which bears the same title, the scene being laid in Scotland. Mary is the heroine; Margaret her old nurse; and Ratcliff, who has the gift of second-sight, has read

the future and worked out his own predestined fate by fighting and slaying the bridegroom forced on Mary by her father. The poem is a sequel to the drama.

The Sonnets are not always happy in their form; but among the best are those to his mother, for his heart was in them. His love of her was one of the good influences of his life.

Versions of two poems from the 'Book of Songs', by the late Charles Pelham Mulvany, which appeared in *Kottabos*, were my first introduction to Heine, and tempted me to try my prentice hand in the perilous art of translation, which I found a fascinating game of skill. Some of the poems seemed to go fairly easily and simply into English, while others were evidently cruxes for the translator; and even in the easier ones there were often stanzas or passages which had to wait for a happy moment before I could find a way out of the difficulties they presented—and unfortunately some of the best poems were the hardest to tackle. I had no intention at first of translating the whole Book; but made it my holiday task to pick out a poem here and there, and attempt to put it into decent English verse. It was not until I had shown what I had done to York Powell, himself a most capable translator, that I went to work seriously to revise the versions I had made, and fill up the many gaps. His criticisms were most valuable, and he kept me to my task going over most of what I had done before his death. I was never satisfied until I had received his *imprimatur* in due form: 'Yes, you've got that.'

Translations of poetry are always more or less unsatisfactory to those familiar with the original; yet not

altogether so futile as some would have them to be. They are like reproductions of pictures, and may range from the level of coarsely-coloured 'process' prints, which carry misrepresentation to the limits of slander, to that of sympathetic copies with brush or etching-needle.

There are two methods of dealing with poetry in a foreign tongue. The first is the strict method of translation, in which the sense, metre, rhythm, and emotion of the original are reproduced as accurately and sympathetically as possible, the translator sinking his own personality in that of his author. This can be effectively used only when the metrical systems of the two languages are similar, even where their grammatical structure is different. The second method is that of free fantasia, in which the sense is rehandled in paraphrase with more or less freedom, and the metre altered if necessary. It is the only method possible where the grammatical construction and metrical form of the original are widely different from those of the translator's language, as in the case of translations from the classics into English.

Heine invites and eludes translation. He must be translated almost literally, his metres and rhythmical changes must be reproduced with all possible perfection, the very aroma of his delicate style must yield something of its fragrance, as in the process of distillation, or there is little left of him but dry bones, and he vanishes with an ironic smile. It is like trying to catch the song of a bird in a phonograph.

But, Heine apart, there are special difficulties in translating German lyrical poetry into English. German is still a primitive tongue as compared with English, which

has lost so many of its inflexions. Inflexions make rhyming easy, and pretty songs indigenous as wayside weeds. It is easier to write good clear simple verse in German than good clear simple prose. Even Goethe's prose is often uncomfortable reading. It is only in verse that he finds his wings.

In my own attempt to translate the 'Book of Songs' I have been fully alive to the difficulties of the task. My endeavour has been, while keeping as closely as possible to the sense and sentiment of the original, to follow those delicate changes in rhythm which Heine uses so daintily, stanza by stanza, while keeping within the bounds of his metre, and on which so much of the emotional expression depends. This does not imply a slavish adherence to the exact rhythm of each line and stanza; for in rhythm, as in sense, there must be a give and take between English and German verse, emotion, sense-emphasis, and rhythm going hand in hand. I have in some cases not followed the original in using double-ending rhymes, where to do so would have involved a more or less clumsy *tour de force*, with loss of simplicity of expression. In the Spanish poems Heine himself sometimes shirks the assonances, and I have followed his example in omitting some of those in the original, to avoid awkward rearrangement of lines. Assonance is easy and natural in Spanish verse, tolerably easy in German; but difficult in English, especially in translation; while the effect is in neither language quite satisfactory. It does not really reproduce the stately grace of Spanish assonant verse.

For the rest, I must leave those familiar with the original to decide how far I have succeeded or failed in my

task, which, though difficult, was always pleasant and stimulating.

In conclusion, I wish to thank my friend, Mr. J. R. Loewe, who is well read in English as well as his own German literature, for his kindness in going carefully through my proofs, noting defects, explaining some of Heine's satirical allusions to bourgeois and student life, and helping me with some of those puzzling passages in which he hints rather than expresses his inmost sense or emotion, as he plays between jest and earnest, hiding an ironic meaning under a tender or complimentary word or phrase.

J. T.

CONTENTS

PAGE

PREFACE TO THIRD EDITION OF THE BOOK OF SONGS . 1

THE SORROWS OF YOUTH

1817–1821

DREAM PICTURES.

Once did I dream of Love's wild-glowing sighs . . 5
A dream of horror and mystery 6
I dreamed one night, and lo! myself I spied . . . 10
In dream I saw the drollest mannikin 10
Why rages and rushes my raving blood . . . 11
In a sweet dream, at hush of night 13
Thou hast thy payment, yet tarriest thou . . . 16
I left the house of my Lady dear 20
I lay and slept, slept quietly 27
Pale corpses I have so many 28

SONGS.

Every morn I rise, demanding 30
It drives me here, it drives me there 30
Under the trees I wandered 31
Dear Love, lay thy hand on this heart of mine . . 32
Stately cradle of my sorrow 32
Tarry, tarry, blustering sailor 34
Tower and mountain stand deep-gazing 35
First I nearly died despairing 35
With roses, and cypress, and leaf of gold . . . 36

ROMANCES.

The Sorrow-stricken 37
Mountain Voices 38

PAGE

The Two Brothers 39
Poor Peter 41
Song of the Prisoner 43
The Grenadiers 44
The Message 46
The Homebringing 47
Don Ramiro 48
Belshazzar 55
The Minnesingers 57
The Window-glance 58
The Wounded Knight 59
The Voyage 60
The Song of Remorse 61
To a fair Singer, singing an old Ballad . . . 64
The Song of the Ducats 65
Amoebaean on Paderborn Heath 67
A Life-greeting 69
The Truth of it 70

SONNETS.

Sonnet-Garland to A. W. von Schlegel. I–III. . . 71
To my mother, B. Heine. I, II. 73
To H. S. 74
Fresco-Sonnets to Christian Sethe.
I'll not chime in, I'll burn no incense, I . . . 75
Give me a mask, I'll join the masquerade . . 75
I laugh at each dull bore, taste's parasite . . 76
A strange Tale haunts my brain with elvish spell . 76
In the still evening hours, tender with woe . . 77
When last I saw you, after twelve months' woe. . . 77
Beware, my friend, of spiteful devils' grimaces . . 78
When Poverty at last left free my road . . . 78
A torture-chamber was the world to me . . . 79
Thou hast seen me oft fight many a treacherous foe . 79
Fain would I weep, and yet, I cannot weep . . 80

LYRICAL INTERMEZZO

1822–1823

PAGE

Prologue 81
In the sweet marvellous month of May 83
Out of my tears there burgeon 83
The rose, and the lily, the sun, and the dove . . . 84
Whene'er I gaze into thine eyes 84
Thy face beloved, thy lovely face 85
Lay thy soft cheek against my cheek 85
So deep will I plunge my spirit 86
The stars far off in heaven 86
On wings of song, Belov'd One 87
The Lotus-flower in torment 88
In the Rhine, the beautiful river 88
You love me not, you love me not 89
O kiss me only, do not swear 90
Upon my Belov'd One's eyes that speak 91
The world is dull, the world is blind 91
Dearest, you to-day shall tell me 92
Radiant as the foam-born Venus 93
I chide thee not, though breaks my heart o'erfraught . 93
Yes, thou art wretched, and I chide thee not . . . 94
Well, here's fine fiddling and fluting 95
So thou hast forgotten utterly 95
If only those fairies, the flowers 96
Oh, why are now the roses so pale 97
They've told you many a story 98
The linden blossomed, the nightingale sang . . . 99
We cared for each other as boy and maid 99
You stuck to me long with patience 100
Till May came Earth was quite penurious 100
And while in strange lands with romantic dreams . . 101
The violets blue of your sweet young eyes . . . 102
The sky is so blue and the world so fair 102
My sweetest Love, when in the grave 103

PAGE

A pine-tree, lone in the Nor'land 104
Ah, could I but the footstool be 104
Since my Love has loved me not 105
From woes too huge to utter 105
The townsfolk in Sunday splendour 106
Grey visions of days forgotten 106
A young man loves a maiden 108
Hear I a sweet voice trilling 108
I dreamed a dream of a Royal Maid 109
We sat in our pinnace together 110
Out of some old, old story 110
I've loved thee ever, and love thee still 111
This radiant summer morning 112
My love in its gloomy splendour 112
I'm black and blue from their worrying 113
Hot summer now is flushing 114
When lovers part from each other 114
They sat and drank tea, and to gentle 115
My songs are full of poison 116
I dreamed again the old, old dream 116
I stood on the mountain-summit 117
My carriage rumbled slowly 118
I wept as I lay dreaming 119
I see you in dreams, and we kindly greet 120
Here 's Autumn howling and roaring 120
The autumn wind 's in the branches 121
There falls a star from heaven 122
The Dream-god bore me to a castle vast 123
'Twas midnight, midnight silent and cold 124
At cross-ways one lies buried 124
Where I am thick darkness o'er me 124
Night lay upon my eyelids 125
The dreams, so bad and bitter 127

THE RETURN HOME

1823–1824

PAGE

On my life so dark and gloomy 129
I know not if aught it presages 130
My heart, my heart is gloomy 131
I wander the wild wood, weeping 132
The night is damp and stormy 133
I met by chance, as I travelled 134
We sat in the fisherman's cottage 135
My pretty fishermaiden 136
The moon is newly risen 137
On the clouds the great moon rests 138
In their cloud-grey mantles muffled 138
The Wind comes raving, his storm-boots white 139
The storm pipes up for dancing 140
Stealthily comes the gloaming 140
Dear maiden, as each morning 142
In the last streak of evenshut 143
Up there on yonder mountain 144
Upon the far horizon 145
I greet thee well, great city 146
I stroll again down the same old way 147
I stood where once she plighted 147
Still is the night, the streets never waken 147
How canst thou sleep so calmly 148
A maiden sleeps in her chamber 149
I stood there, darkly dreaming 150
I miserable Atlas! a whole world 150
The years are coming and going 151
I dreamed: the moon looked sadly down 151
Why comest thou, lonely teardrop 152
The wan half-moon of Autumn 153
Well, here's the worst of bad weather 155
They think I'm always pining 156
Ah! those lilies white, thy fingers 157

PAGE

Has she never seemed to pity 157
They loved one another; yet neither 158
When first I complained of my evil case 158
I called the Devil, and he came 158
Man, be civil to the Devil 159
The Holy Three Kings from the Morning Land . . . 160
My child, we two were children 160
The heart in me is lead, and grieving 162
As the moon sails onward, striving 163
In dream I saw my Belov'd One 164
'Why, my friend, keep on preluding 165
Don't give way to such impatience 165
'Tis time to all follies I bade adieu 166
The wise King Visvamitra 167
Heart, my heart, let naught dismay thee 167
Sweet as a flower thou seemest 168
Child! lest I thy life should ruin 168
When on my couch I am lying 169
Maiden with the lips like rosebuds 170
Snow out there may rise in towers 170
To Our Lady kneel in duty 171
My pallid face betrays it not 171
Friend, thou art with love distraught 172
I longed at your side to tarry 172
Bright sapphires are those eyes of thine 173
With half-lying lover's pleading 174
Life and the world are too fragmentary 174
Too long have I my head been splitting. 174
They're having a party this evening 175
I would I might pour my sorrows 176
Thou hast all a mortal could covet 176
He who for the first time loves 177
Squandering advice and good counsel on me . . . 178
Who could hold in too much honour 178
I dreamed I was the Lord Himself 180
One perfect day in July I left you 182

PAGE
From sweetest lips thrust forth, and rudely driven . . 183
Alone in the dark post-wagon 183
God best knows in what strange quarters 184
Like dismal dreams the houses 184
Oh, when you are my wedded wife 185
Upon thy snow-white shoulder 186
The Blue Hussars have come bugling 186
I too in my youth, poor duffer 187
Have you really come to hate me 188
Ah, once more those eyes that ever 188
Seldom ye my thoughts can follow 189
The eunuchs all abused me 189
Soft and cool o'er Salamanca 190
Close to me dwells Don Enriquez 190
We scarcely had met ere thy voice and thy glances . . 191
Over the mountain climbs now the sunlight . . . 192
In Halle's market-place 192
Summer twilight now reposes 193
Night o'er my strange road lies brooding 193
Death is for me the cool of night 194
Where is now your charming Sweetheart 194
Twilight of the Gods 195
Ratcliff 198
Donna Clara 202
Almansor. I–III 207
The Pilgrimage to Kevlaar. I–III 213

POEMS FROM THE HARZ-JOURNEY

1824

Prologue 217
A Mountain Idyll. I–III 218
The Herd-boy 228
On the Brocken 230
Ilse 231
On the Hardenberg 233

THE NORTH SEA

1825–1826

FIRST CYCLE.

	PAGE
Coronation	235
Evening Twilight	236
Sunset	237
A Night by the Strand	239
Poseidon	242
Declaration	244
A Night in the Cabin	245
Storm	248
Calm	250
Ocean-wraith	251
Purification	254
Peace	255

SECOND CYCLE.

Greeting to the Sea	257
Thunderstorm	259
Shipwreck	260
Sunset	262
The Song of the Oceanids	264
The Gods of Greece	267
Questions	271
The Phoenix	272
Sea-sickness	273
In Haven	276
Epilogue	279

PREFACE TO THIRD EDITION OF THE BOOK OF SONGS

I

'TWAS the old Forest of Fairytale!
Their odour the lindens panted,
With glamour of marvellous moonlight-gleams
My spirit was enchanted.

2

I wandered on, and as I went
The heavens were all a-ringing.
It was the Nightingale, of love
And of love's torment, singing.

3

She sang of love and love's despair,
Of laughter and of weeping,
With warbling so woeful, such rapturous moan,
Old dreams awoke from their sleeping.—

4

I wandered on, and as I went
Through that dim Land of Fable,
Saw a great Castle in a glade,
With many a lofty gable.

5

The windows barred, o'er all there hung
Silence and desolation ;
Dumb Death had made in those mouldering walls
His quiet habitation.

6

There by the threshold crouched a Sphinx,
Twy-natured, alluring, abhorrèd,
A lion in body and limbs and claws,
A woman from breasts to forehead.

7

A beautiful woman ! Her marble gaze
Spoke subtly of wildest passion ;
Her dumb stone lips in their curving smiled
In coy, voluptuous fashion.

8

The Nightingale she sang so sweet,
Resistance was vain endeavour,—
And as I kissed that ravishing face
I knew I was lost for ever.

9

That marble form took wondrous life,
The stone moaned with horrid yearning—
She panted for bliss, and with eager thirst
She drank my kisses burning.

10

She sucked the breath nigh out of me—
And, lusting for joys new-fangled,
She clasped me close, while my wretched corse
With her lion's claws she mangled.

11

O torment delicious, and rapturous woe!
The pain immense as the pleasure;
For while I was blest by the kiss of her mouth
Her claws took toll in full measure.

12

The Nightingale sang: 'O beautiful Sphinx!
O Love! what a mystery this is,
That thou shouldst mingle with deadly dole
All thy most holy blisses!

13

'O beautiful Sphinx, come read me now
This most mysterious riddle!
I've pondered it many a thousand year,
Beginning, and end, and middle.'

. . . . . .

All this I could have said very well in good prose. . . . But when a New Edition is in the wind, and one comes to read over one's old poems, touching them up here and there, the jingling habit of rhyming and syllable-marshalling gets possession of one unawares, and behold! it is with verses I prelude this Third Edition of the Book of Songs.

O Phoebus Apollo! if these verses be bad, thou wilt readily grant me pardon. For thou art a God who knowest all things, and thou dost know right well wherefore, while so many years went by, I could not specially busy myself with the measuring and rhyming of words.

Thou knowest why I was so suddenly compelled to turn that brilliant display of fireworks, which once delighted the world, into a much more serious conflagration. Thou knowest why it now consumes my heart with silently-glowing flame. Thou dost understand me, great and beautiful God; for even so didst thou exchange, now and then, the golden lyre for the mighty bow and deadly arrows. Rememberest thou even yet one Marsyas, whom thou didst flay alive? That was long ago, and there is need once more for such an example.—Thou smilest, O my Father immortal!

Written in Paris, February 20, 1839.

Heinrich Heine.

THE SORROWS OF YOUTH

1817–1821

Dream Pictures

I

1

ONCE did I dream of Love's wild-glowing sighs,
Of shining locks, myrtle and mignonette,
Of sweet lips, bitter words, remembered yet,
Of gloomy songs to gloomy melodies.

2

Faded those dreams, blown by this long, long time,
Blown far away that dearest Shape of Dreams!
Alone is left me what in glowing streams
I once poured forth in many a plaintive rhyme.

3

Thou, orphaned Song, remain'st! Thou too blow by,
And seek that Shape of Dreams, from me long vanished,
And, found, greet it from me, as from one banished—
That airy shade I send an airy sigh.

II

1

A DREAM of horror and mystery
Delighted and affrighted me.
Still ghastly shapes in dreams appear,
And wildly throbs my heart for fear.

2

I found a garden wondrous fair,
And full of joy would enter there ;
Many a fair flower looked on me,
And joy I had those flowers to see.

3

And there the birds were carolling,
Blithe songs of love I heard them sing ;
The glowing sun shed golden showers
Of light on the gay-coloured flowers.

4

Each herb exhaled balsamic air,
Soft winds breathed gently everywhere ;
And all things laughed, and all things gleamed ;
Kindly on me their splendour beamed.

5

And there, amid this flowery land,
I saw a marble fountain stand ;
And by it saw a Maiden fair
Wash busily a white robe there.

6

Her cheeks were sweet, eyes meek not bold,
A holy picture with hair like gold;
I gazed, and found her, strange to tell,
A stranger, yet I knew her well.

7

Still the fair Maiden worked away,
Humming the while a magic lay:
'Bubble, bubble, water bright,
Wash my linen clean and white!'

8

Then to her side I made my way,
And whispered low: 'Tell me, I pray,
O Maiden sweet and wondrous fair,
For whom you wash that white robe there?'

9

'Make ready!' straight she answered me,
'Thy winding-sheet I wash for thee!'
And this no sooner had she said
Than foamlike all the vision fled.—

10

Cast forth, as by a spell, I stood
Within a wild and gloomy wood.
The trees their boughs to heaven raught;
Astound I stood, and thought, and thought.

11

And hark! what muffled echo spoke,
Like to an axe's far-off stroke?
Through bush and brake I hastened on,
Till a clear space I came upon.

12

And there, amidst of the green glade,
A mighty oak stood, thick of shade;
And lo! my Maid, strange thing to see,
Hewed with an axe the mighty tree!

13

In wondrous wise, with stroke on stroke,
She hummed her song, and smote the oak:
'Iron clink, iron clank,
Coffin frame of oaken plank!'

14

Then to her side I made my way,
And whispered low: 'Tell me, I pray,
O Maiden sweet, and wondrous fair,
For whom this coffin you prepare?'

15

'The time is short,' she answered me,
'Thy coffin here I frame for thee!'
And this no sooner had she said
Than foamlike all the vision fled.—

16

There lay around me, wan and wide,
But bald, bald heath on every side;
I knew not what befell me then,
And, strangely shuddering, paused again.

17

Then further yet I wandered on,
Far o'er the heath some white thing shone;
Rash haste I made to gain that ground,
And lo! the Maiden fair I found.

18

On the wide heath stood the white Maid,
Dug deep the earth with graveyard spade.
Scarce look upon her might I dare,
A grisly thing, and yet so fair.

19

The Maiden fair still worked away,
Humming the while her magic lay :
' Sharp spade, broad spade,
Deep and wide the pit be made ! '

20

Then to her side I made my way,
And whispered low : ' Tell me, I pray,
O Maiden sweet, and wondrous fair,
What bodes that pit thou diggest there ? '

21

' Be silent,' straight she said, ' I have
Dug for thee here a cool deep grave.'
And as the Maiden fair replied,
The pit before me opened wide.

22

And as I gazed into the pit
Ran through me fear's cold ague-fit ;
Down to the grave's deep night, aquake,
I plunged—and lo ! I was awake !

III

I DREAMED one night, and lo! myself I spied
In black dress-coat, and silken vest of state,
With ruffles on my wrists, go to a fête,
And there my sweet Love stood in wedding pride.
Bowing, I said to her: 'Are you a bride?
Indeed! Dear Madam I congratulate——'
Though that polite long word, as cold as fate,
Half choked my hoarse throat, as to speak I tried.
And bitter tears I saw gush suddenly
From my Love's eyes; and then a rushing stream
Of tears that sad sweet vision swept from me.
O ye sweet eyes, O holy Stars of Love,
Though ye to me, in waking as in dream,
So oft have lied, I trust you all else above!

IV

IN dream I saw the drollest mannikin,
Who went on stilts, with strides each a good ell,
He wore white linen, and fine clothes as well,
But he was coarse and filthy all within.
Inwardly a poor wretch, not worth a pin,
Without, in valour none could more excel;
Everywhere from his tongue brave speeches fell,
In deeds a braggart ass in lion's skin.
'And don't you know who that is? Come and see!'
So said the Dream-god, and maliciously
Showed me his mirror's changing pictures then.
This oaf stood at an altar in full dress,
My Love as well, and both of them said: 'Yes!'
A thousand devils, laughing, cried: 'Amen!'

V

1

WHY rages and rushes my raving blood?
Why flames my heart in glowing flood?
My seething blood it foams and fumes,
And furious rage my heart consumes.

2

My blood it seethes and foams, gone mad,
Because an evil dream I've had;
Night's dismal Son came where I lay,
And bore me gasping far away.

3

He brought me to a House all bright
With torches' flare and tapers' light,
Where harps I heard and revellers' din;
I found the guest-room, and went in.

4

It was a merry wedding-feast,
At table gay sat many a guest.
But when the happy pair I spied—
Woe 's me! it was my Love was bride.

5

It was my Love, a blissful bride,
A strange man Bridegroom by her side;
And close behind the Bride's own chair
I stood quite still, in dumb despair.

6

The music pealed—quite still I stood ;
The noise of mirth made sad my mood.
The Bride she looked supremely blest,
When her dear hand the Bridegroom prest.

7

I saw the Bridegroom fill his glass,
Drink, and with courtly gesture pass
To her, who smiled, her lord to thank.—
Woe 's me ! 'twas my red blood she drank.

8

Then took the Bride an apple fair,
And to the Bridegroom passed it there.
He took his knife, and sliced it through,—
Woe 's me ! it was my heart he slew.

9

Long fondly each the other eyed,
The Bridegroom boldly clasped the Bride,
And her hot cheeks kissed amorously,—
Woe 's me ! Death's icy lips kissed me !

10

Like lead my tongue lay in my mouth,
I could not speak a word, for drouth.
The band struck up, the dance began,
The smart-drest couple in the van.

11

As dumb I stood in corpse-like stound,
The dancers briskly whirled around ;—
A whispered word the Bridegroom said,
The Bride, but not in wrath, grew red.

VI

1

IN a sweet dream, at hush of night,
Came to me once through magic might,
Through magic might my Dearest One
Came to me in my chamber lone.

2

I gazed on her, the sweet pure child!
I gazed on her, she gently smiled,
And smiled, until my bosom swelled,
And fiercely bold my words outwelled:

3

'Take all, take everything that's mine,
The dearest thing I have be thine,
But in my arms to feel thee glow
From midnight till the cock shall crow!

4

In strange surprise she gazed on me
So kindly, sadly, tenderly,
The lovely Maid, answering but this:
'Give me thy hope of heaven's bliss!'

5

'My life so sweet, my heart's young blood,
I'd give with joy and lustihood
For thee, angelic Maid; not this—
Never my hope of heaven's bliss.'

6

So blustered I; but yet more fair
Each passing moment bloomed she there,
The Maiden, answering only this:
'Give me thy hope of heaven's bliss!'

7

Dull droned that word within my ear,
And roused a glowing sea, that sheer
From my soul's deepest deep upseethed;
I breathed with pain, I hardly breathed.—

8

Where dwelt the white-robed angels bright,
Aureoled each in golden light,
Out of the abyss the Kobolds black
Now wildly stormed, in grisly pack.

9

They fought against the angels bright,
And thrust them out, those angels bright;
Until at last the swarthy elves
Melted away like clouds themselves.—

10

But I in joy would swoon away,
Clasped in my arms my fair Love lay;
She nestled by me like a doe,
Weeping the while for bitter woe.

11

My Dear One wept; I well knew why,
And dumb her rosebud mouth kissed I—
'O stay, my Love, those tears that flow,
And yield thee to my passion's glow!'

12

'And yield thee to my passion's glow—'
Sudden my blood turned ice, and lo!
Earth's deep foundations quaked at this,
There opened yawning an abyss.

13

And from that black abyss the grim
Black troop arose;—my Love grew dim!
She vanished from my arms—was gone;
I was left standing there alone.

14

Then dancing strangely, eerily,
The swarthy troop encircled me,
And thronging round me, hemmed me in,
With sneering laughter's yelling din.

15

And ever less the circle grew,
And ever droned the ghastly crew:
'Thou hast renounced thy bliss in heaven,
And evermore to us art given!'

VII

1

THOU hast thy payment, yet tarriest thou?
Thou blackaviced fellow, why tarriest now,
In this dear little room where I wearily bide?
And midnight is coming—naught fails but the Bride.

2

Many shuddering winds from the churchyard blow;
O winds have ye seen my young Bride, or no?
Many shapes rise pale out of nothingness,
Mopping, and grinning, and nodding: 'O yes!'

3

Out with it! What bring'st thou for message dire,
Thou swarthy scoundrel in livery of fire?
'The Gracious Lady desires me to say:
With her dragon-team hither she speeds on her way.'

4

What seek you now, my grey Dominie dear?
Oho, my dead Master, what brings you here?
He stares on me with a sorrowful stare,
And, shaking his head, back again doth fare.

5

Why whimpers and fawns this bandog here?
Why glimmer the black cat's eyes so clear?
Why howl these women with flying hair?
Why croons my old Nurse my old cradle-song there?

6

Old Nurse, at home with your sing-song stay,
For nursery rhymes I am long past my day;
To-day I am holding my wedding-feast,
Look there! They are coming, smart guest after guest.

7

Look there! My dear sirs, what rare courtesy!
Your heads in your hands, where the hat should be!
You jerky-legged sprawlers, in gallows array,
The wind is still, why so late on your way?

8

Here comes Mother Broomstick, quite early I vow,
Come, give your own son your blessing now.
How trembles her mouth in her wan white face,
As 'Amen, world without end!' she says.

9

Twelve wind-dried musicians come slouching here,
The fiddle-wife limping blind in the rear;
The harlequin, chequered in red and black,
Jogs in, with the grave-digger pick-a-back.

10

Twelve nuns from the cloister come dancing too;
The squinting bawd leads them paces new;
Twelve lustful priestlings follow them soon,
And whine a lewd song to a holy tune.

11

Old-clothesman, don't scream yourself black in the face,
Your fur-coat in limbo were quite out of place;
They warm you there gratis from year to year
With princes' and paupers' bones—wood 's dear.

12

These hump-backed flower-girls are bent into wheels,
And all round the room tumble head-over-heels.
Ye owl-visaged oafs, and grasshopper-legged things,
Hi! plague me no more with these rib-clatterings!

13

All hell 's let loose in earnest at last,
And swarming and storming comes mustering fast;
And now the Damnation Waltz rings clear,—
Hush! hush! my sweet Love will ere long be here.

14

Ye rabble, be quiet, or hence with you all!
I barely can hear my own voice though I bawl—
Ha! surely the wheels of her chariot grate?
Come Cooky! where are you? Quick! open the gate!

15

O welcome, my Darling, how goes it, my dear?
And welcome, good Pastor—pray take your place here!
Good Pastor, with cloven foot, and tail,
In serving your Reverence I never will fail.

16

My dear little Bride, why so pale and so dumb?
Our good Pastor post-haste to our wedding is come;
Right dearly I pay him my blood's worth for fee,
But Oh, to possess thee, that 's child's-play to me!

17

Kneel down, my sweet Bride, kneel beside me, like this !
She kneels, she sinks down—O the heavenly bliss !
She sinks on my heart ; to my breast, swelling high,
I clasp her in shuddering ecstasy.

18

Her bright hair o'er us both weaves a wavering shade,
And close to my heart beats the heart of the Maid.
They beat both together for joy and for woe,
And soaring aloft into heaven they go.

19

Poor tiny hearts ! in a blissful sea
They float up there in God's sanctuary ;
Though Hell on our heads, like a burning brand,
Its horror laid where it laid its hand.

20

It is the dismal Son of Night
Who blesses us with his Cross of Blight ;
From a blood-written book he has muttered a verse,
His prayer 's but blaspheming, his blessing a curse.

21

There come croakings, and hissings, and madmen's howls,
As when ocean roars and the thunder growls ;—
There flames on a sudden the brimstone's blaze,
As ' Amen, world without end ! ' the old Mother says.

VIII

1

I LEFT the house of my Lady dear,
And walked in delusion and midnight fear,
And as I was passing the churchyard by,
The graves made grim signal silently.

2

There came from the Minstrel's gravestone a sign,
Where fell the glimmer of pale moonshine,
One whispered: 'Dear Brother, I come anon!'
One rose from his grave-place, mistlike wan.

3

The Minstrel it was, just risen alone,
And he sat aloft on his own headstone.
He fingered his ghittern, string by string,
And harsh and hollow began to sing:

'Ha! know ye still the old Lay of Lays,
That glowed in our breasts in bygone days,
Dull strings long lorn of mirth?
The Angels they call it Heavenly Joy,
The Devils they call it Hell's Annoy;
But Men call it Love, on earth!'

And scarce were that last Word's echoes done,
When straightway opened the graves each one;
And airy shapes came thronging amain,
O'erhovering the Minstrel, and shrilling this strain:

'Love! O Love! it was thy might
Couched us here in sorry plight,
And our eyes shut from heaven's light,
Ho! why call'st thou through the night?'

They howled out of tune, and they dismally groaned,
They blustered and roared, croaked, and clamoured, and moaned;
And the whole mad swarm did the Minstrel surround,
And wildly the Minstrel the strings made sound:

'Bravo! bravo! madmen still!
Be ye welcome!
At my spell come
All who heard my spellword shrill!
Yet we lie from year to year
Still as mice in chambers drear;
Let us have a rouse to-day!
May I beg
First ye see none comes this way?

'Fools we were while we lived gladly,
With fine rage abandoned madly
To the maddening itch of Love.
So, to season leisure duly,
Every one shall tell us truly
What old folly brought him here:
How Love bayed,
How he flayed,
In his mad hunting, every deer.'

Then hopped from the circle a meagre young man,
As light as a zephyr, and droning began :

'A Tailor's lad was I, sirs,
With needle and with shears,
I was so smart and spry, sirs,
With needle and with shears.

'Then came my Master's Daughter,
With needle and with shears,
And of my heart made slaughter,
With needle and with shears.'

The Ghosts laughed in chorus, with lusty shout,
And gloomy and grave a Second stept out :

'Don Rinaldo Rinaldini,
Schinderhanno, Orlandini,
And Carl Moor more fondly yet,
As models I before me set.

'I too—in my humble fashion—
Like these heroes felt Love's passion ;
For on me a Fair One smiled,
Turned my brain, and drove me wild.

'I sighed, I cooed through all the tenses,
And when Love had crazed my senses,
In my wealthy neighbour's fob
My nimble fingers found a job.

'But the spiteful watchman, spying,
Swore love's tears I would be drying
With my neighbour's handkerchief
Kept to stanch his private grief.

'And, in gentle catchpoll's fashion,
Off he hauled me to the station;
The Bridewell, rescued sinner's rest,
Clasped me to its mother's breast.

'Revelling in sweet lover's trances,
Oakum picking, I fed my fancies,
Till Rinaldo's ghost one day
Came, and bare my soul away.'

The Ghosts laughed in chorus, with lusty shout;
Berouged and bedizened a Third stept out:

'I was a King of the Stage once,
And played the Lover's part,
Oft bellowed: "Ye Gods!" in wild rage once,
Sighed tenderly: "Ah!" from my heart.

'As *Mortimer* I acted divinely,
Each *Mary* I found so fair!
'Twas in earnest I wooed her so finely,
Yet never a pin did she care.

'And once, when in desperate fashion:
"O Mary, sweet saint!" I cried,
The dagger I drove with passion
A trifle too deep in my side.'

The Ghosts laughed in chorus, with lusty shout ;
In a white wrap-rascal a Fourth stept out :

'From his chair the Professor would sling us his patter,
He pattered, and I slept soundly the while,
'Twould have pleased me a thousand times more, for
that matter,
The time with his Daughter fair to beguile.

'How oft from her window she tenderly beckoned,
The flower of all flowers, my life's dear light !
But that flower of all flowers was plucked in a second
By a fusty curmudgeon, a rich old blight.

'Then cursed I all women, and every rich miser,
With nightshade berries my wine made sick,
Hobnobbing with Death, like many a wiser,—
Quoth he : " Fiducit ! " my name is Old Nick ! '

The Ghosts laughed in chorus, with lusty shout ;
With a rope round his throttle, a Fifth stept out :

'He swaggered and boasted, the Count, at wine,
Of his daughter divine and his jewel so fine.
What cared I, Sir Count, for thy jewel so fine?
Much more to my taste was that daughter of thine.

'They both of them lay under bolt, lock, and key,
And the Count had many a varlet in fee.
What cared I for varlets, for bolt, lock, or key?
I climbed the ladder right gallantly.

'To my Loved One's window I clamber bold,
Below comes angry cursing; and "Hold!
Fair and easy, my lad, half this venture is mine;
I, too, am in love with that jewel so fine."

'So jeered the Count, and he gripped me tight,
And his vassals, shouting, o'erpowered me quite.
"To the Devil, ye rabble! No robber am I,
I came but to steal my own Love!" I cry.

'No cunning served me, naught served a word,
And there in a trice they had noosed the cord;
When the sun came out he was shocked to spy
The gibbet gleaming, and there hung I.'

The Ghosts laughed in chorus, with lusty shout;
His head in his hand, a Sixth stept out:

'To soothe with sport the pains of love,
With gun on arm I tracked the grove.
Down from a tree, with hollow cough,
The Raven croaked: "Head—off! Head—off!"

'Oh, could I spy a ringdove here,
I'd bring it home to give my Dear!
So mused I, while through bush and brake
My sportsman's eye crept like a snake.

'What 's cooing there? What 's billing now?
Two turtles, haply, on one bough!
My piece full-cocked, close, close I draw—
And lo! 'twas my own Love I saw.

'It was my Dove, my Bride, my own,
A stranger's arms around her thrown—
Now, marksman tried, thy aim be good!
There lay the stranger in his blood.

'And soon Jack Ketch with all his crew,
Myself, chief actor, full in view—
Filed through the wood. With hideous cough
The Raven croaked: "Head—off! Head—off!"'

The Ghosts laughed in chorus, with lusty shout;
And last the Minstrel himself stept out:

THE MINSTREL'S SONG

'I sang a song in my Maytime,
That song to an end has come;
When the heart in the breast lies broken,
'Tis time for the songs to go home!'

Then rose the mad laughter twice as loud,
And soared in a circle the pallid crowd;
One toll the clock from the Church-tower gave,
And howling the Spirits rushed down to the grave.

IX

1

I LAY and slept, slept quietly,
Banished were pain and care;
There came in dream a Maid to me,
The fairest of the fair.

2

As pale as marble, clear she grew,
An eerie presence there;
Her eyes shone dim through pearly dew,
And strangely waved her hair.

3

And gently, gently did she glide,
That Maiden marble-pale,
And laid her down my heart beside,
That Maiden marble-pale.

4

How throbbed my heart for joy and woe,
And glowed in wild surprise!
But glowed nor throbbed her breast of snow,
That was as cold as ice.

5

'Throbs not, nor glows my breast of snow
That is as cold as ice;
Yet Love's almighty power I know,
And all his joys likewise.

6

'Though on my cheek no rose bloom red,
No blood flow through my heart;
Shrink not from me in shuddering dread,
My leman dear thou art.'

7

And wilder, closer, clasped she me,
Nigh working me some bale;
The cock crew—then fled silently
That Maiden marble-pale.

X

1

PALE corpses I have so many
Conjured with my Word of Might;
They never again will vanish
Back into ancient night.

2

The taming-spell of the Master
Dread horror drove from my brain;
And now to their cloudy dwelling
My Spirits would drag me amain.

3

Hands off, and clutch me no longer
Avaunt, ye Demons of Night!
Still many joys may await me
Up here in the rosy light.

4

I must pursue for ever
That Flower so fair to see;
What boots, if I may not love her
The whole of my life to me?

5

Oh! might I but once embrace her,
But once to my heart might strain!
On lips and on cheeks of my Darling,
Kiss once the blessedest pain!

6

But once from her mouth so tender
One loving word might I hear,—
Oh then at your hour would I follow,
Ye ghosts, to your mansion drear.

7

The Ghosts agree to the bargain,
And all nod gruesomely.
Now, now—I come to thee, Sweetheart;—
Ah! Sweetheart, lovest thou me?

Songs

I

1

EVERY morn I rise, demanding:
'Comes my Love to-day?'
Every night lie down complaining:
'Still she keeps away.'

2

In the night-time with my sorrow
Wide awake I lie;
Half-asleep I wander dreaming,
While each day goes by.

II

1

IT drives me here, it drives me there!
A few hours more, and I surely shall meet her,
Herself, the most fair of fair maids, I shall greet her;—
Why throbs my true heart this tune of despair?

2

Ah me! but these Hours are such lazy loons!
Sluggards, jogging their easy paces,
Loitering, yawning in our faces;—
Stir your stumps, ye lazy loons!

3

I by the Furies of Haste am possest!
Ah! but they ne'er were Lovers, these Hours;—
Sworn in a hideous league with fell powers,
Spitefully mock they the Lover's unrest.

III

1

UNDER the trees I wandered,
With my own grief apart;
Then came the old mood of dreaming,
And glided into my heart.

2

Who taught you that Word so tender,
Ye Birds in the heights of the air?
O hush! when my fond heart hears it,
It sinks once more in despair.

3

'There came a young Maiden roaming,
And still in her songs 'twas heard;
We Birds have caught from her singing
That pretty golden Word.'[1]

4

No more shall ye tell me that story,
Ye Birds, uncanny and sly;
Ye would rob me fain of my sorrow,
But never a soul trust I.

[1] The word Love.

IV

1

DEAR Love, lay thy hand on this heart of mine ;
Ah ! hear how it beats in its narrow shrine !
A Carpenter dwells there, wicked and sly,
Who makes me a coffin before I die.

2

This hammering and rapping by day and by night
Has long ago murdered my sleep outright.
Ah ! Master Carpenter, work away fast,
That I may get some sleep at last !

V

1

STATELY cradle of my sorrow,
Tomb of all my ease of heart,
Stately town, for many a morrow
Fare thee well ! for we must part.

2

Fare thee well, thou holy threshold,
Where my Love in childhood strayed ;
Fare thee well, thou holy dwelling,
Where I first beheld the Maid !

3

Ah! had I but seen thee never,
Queen of Hearts, most fair to see!
Ne'er had chanced that now for ever
Full of woe my life must be.

4

Ne'er wished I thy heart's annoying,
Ne'er thy love have I implored;
Blest were I calm life enjoying
Where she breathed whom I adored.

5

Yet, driven forth for my offences,
Bitter words thy tongue doth speak;
Madness rages in my senses,
And my heart is sore and sick.

6

Forth I steal, on weak limbs creeping,
With my pilgrim's wand for stay,
Till my weary head lie sleeping
In my cold grave far away.

VI

1

TARRY, tarry, blustering sailor,
Soon aboard I'll follow thee;
From two maidens, Her and Europe,
I must part, ere I be free.

2

Pour from out mine eyes, ye blood-springs,
Blood-springs, from my body flow,
That with blood hot from my heart-veins,
I may chronicle my woe!

3

Ah! my Love, why now, now only,
Shudderest thou my blood to see?
Wan thou hast seen me, heart a-bleeding,
Stand for years, long years by thee!

4

Knowest thou still that ancient legend
Of the Snake in Paradise,
Who with evil gift of apples
Whelmed our Sire in miseries?

5

Apples brought us every mischief!
Eve with one brought the world death,
Eris brought the flames of Ilion,
Thou hast brought both flame and death.

VII

1

TOWER and mountain stand deep-gazing
In the clear and mirroring Rhine,
Briskly sails my little shallop,
All around her sunbeams shine.

2

Quietly I watch them playing,
Golden ripplets ne'er at rest
Gently now awake the feelings
I have borne deep in my breast.

3

Greeting me with friendly promise
Lures me down the river's light;
Yet I know—that glozing surface
Hides below but death and night.

4

Joy above, spite in thy bosom,
Stream thou ap'st my Love's deceit!
Just as kindly can she beckon,
Smile as innocently sweet.

VIII

FIRST I nearly died despairing,
Thought I ne'er could bear it; now—
Well, I've borne it, and am bearing,
Only do not ask me: 'How?'

IX

1

WITH roses, and cypress, and leaf of gold
Would I deck this volume thy hand will hold,
Sweet and fair as a dead-man's shrine,
And bury in it these songs of mine.

2

Oh, could I within it my love enchest!
On the grave of Love grows the Flower of Rest,
There one may gather it, blooming brave,—
Though for me 'twill bloom but upon my grave.

3

Here now are the Songs that wildly of yore,
As the lava-streams Etna once did pour,
Gushed forth from my spirit's deepest deep,
While round them sparks would like lightnings leap!

4

Now dumbly they lie, as dead they were,
Now pale as clouds and as cold they stare.
Yet again the old life in their veins would seethe
Should the spirit of life once over them breathe.

5

And strange hopes would speak in my heart anew
If Love shed over them once his dew;
When comes this Book into thy hand,
My sweet Love in a far-off land.

6

Then, song from its baneful spell set free,
The wan-faced letters will gaze on thee,
Will gaze, with a prayer, in thy gentle eyes,
And whisper their sorrow and true-love sighs.

ROMANCES

I

The Sorrow-stricken

1

EVERY heart is pierced with pity
When the pale-faced Youth goes by,
With his sufferings and his sorrows
On his face writ legibly.

2

Pitying winds come gently wafting
Coolness to his burning brow;
Many a Maid, once coy and prudish,
Fain would smile him comfort now.

3

From the wildering noise of cities
To the lonely woods he flies;
Merrily there the green leaves rustle,
Merrier, songs of birds arise.

4

But the songs anon grow silent,
Sadly murmur tree and leaf,
When too near the Sorrow-stricken,
Slowly pacing, brings his grief.

II

Mountain Voices

1

A HORSEMAN through the mountain vale
Goes pacing slow and grave:
'Oh fare I now to my Lady's arms,
Or down to the gloomy grave?'
The Echoes answer gave:
'To the gloomy grave!'

2

And further the Horseman rides, and heaves
A sigh from his heavy breast:
'If then I go to the grave so soon,—
'Tis well, in the grave is rest!'
A voice from the mountain's crest
Replied: 'In the grave is rest!'

3

From the Horseman's eye adown his cheek
A sorrowful teardrop fell:
'If but in the grave there is rest for me,
To rest in the grave 'twere well.'
The Voices tolled like a knell:
'In the grave 'twere well!'

III

The Two Brothers

1

WHERE the mountain-peaks are glimmering
Looms a Castle through the night;
Lightnings in the vale are shimmering,
Fiercely clashing falchions bright.

2

'Tis two Brothers there are fighting
That grim duel, hand to hand.
Say what wrong they dream of righting,
What fierce rage glows in each brand?

3

Countess Laura's eyes inflaming
With their sparks this brothers' fray,
Mad with love they kindle, claiming
Each the sweet and noble may.

4

But to which, or both, or neither,
Turns her heart? Her heart, I trow,
Searched decides not yet for either,—
Out then, sword, decide it thou!

5

So swift blow on blow falls crashing
Fiercely, rashly, as they fight.
Oh beware, wild swords a-clashing,
Wicked witchcraft prowls by night!

6

Woe to each bloodthirsty Brother!
Woe to thee, thou bloody glade!
Each mad foeman slays the other,
Falling on his Brother's blade.—

7

Many an age and generation
Time leaves buried in his flight;
Sadly from its mountain station
Looks the mouldering Tower by night.

8

For by night, strange magic stealing
O'er the vale, all comes again;
At the twelfth hour's ghostly pealing
There they fight, those Brothers twain.

IV

Poor Peter

I

1

BLITHE Hans and his Gretë they dancing come,
Loud laughing for utter gladness,
Poor Peter stands stock-still and dumb,
As pale as chalk for sadness.

2

Blithe Hans and his Gretë are bridegroom and bride,
In wedding finery flaring.
Poor Peter, gnawing his nails aside,
His workday clothes is wearing.

3

Poor Peter mutters, as on the pair
He looks with eyes of sorrow:
'If I had not too much good sense, I swear
I'd go hang myself to-morrow.'

II

1

'Deep in my breast there sits a woe,
My breast with sorrow riving,
From where I stay, from where I go
'Twill thrust me, ever driving.

2

'It drives me to my Love, and sighs,
As though the girl could heal it;
But when I look into her eyes,
Thence I must fly, I feel it.

3

'I climb the mountain summit bare,
Lone tryst with sorrow keeping;
And when I stand in silence there,
I stand there dumbly weeping.'

III

1

Poor Peter he goes tottering by,
So slowly, deadly pale, and shy.
And when folk see him, as they meet,
They're moved to loiter in the street.

2

The girls will whisper: 'Has this man
Come from his grave?' as they him scan.
Nay, pretty maids, he goes instead
Down in the grave to lay his head.

3

He 's lost his Sweetheart; for his case,
Therefore, the grave is the best place,
Where best his lodging find he may,
And sleep until the Judgement Day.

V

Song of the Prisoner

1

BECAUSE my old Granny had Lisa bewitched
The people were wanting to burn her.
Much paper the Mayor with much ink had besmutched
But none to confession could turn her.

2

When crammed in the caldron she cried: 'Alack!'
And 'Murder!' yet proved no craven;
And when the smoke rose thick and black
Up soared she, changed to a raven.

3

My black, my feathery Grandmother dear,
Oh pay me a visit, I prithee!
Come, fly in quick through this grating here,
And cakes and cheese bring me with thee.

4

My black, my feathery Grandmother dear,
May't please thee keep me from sorrow!
That my kinsfolk mayn't pick out my eyes, be near
When I dance on the air to-morrow!

VI

The Grenadiers

1

TO France two Grenadiers trudged home,
From prison in Russia faring;
But when to their German quarters come,
They hung down their heads, despairing.

2

For there they heard the bad news of the day;
How fortune had France forsaken,
Defeated, shattered the *Grande Armée*,
And the Emperor, the Emperor taken.

3

Then wept together the Grenadiers,
Because of that tale of mourning,
And one said: 'How my heart it sears,
And how my old wound is burning!'

4

The other said: 'The game's played out,
I'd die with thee to-morrow;
But my wife and child at home, I doubt,
Without me are come to sorrow.'

5

'What 's wife to me, what 's child to me,
With passion far nobler I'm shaken;
Let them beg their bread if they hungry be,—
My Emperor, my Emperor taken!

6

'But grant me, Comrade, one last prayer,
If my marching 's done, and I'm dying,
Take my bones to France, and bury me there,
In good French earth leave me lying.

7

'The Cross of Honour with blood-red band
Lay next my heart, its old neighbour;
And put my musket in my hand,
And round me gird my sabre.

8

'And there will I lie and hearken, dumb
In my grave, like a sentry, staying,
Till thundering above me the cannons come,
And chargers tramping and neighing.

9

'Then my Emperor comes riding right over my grave,
Swords flash and clang through our valley;
I leap at their music full-armed from my grave,
Round the Emperor, the Emperor to rally!'

VII

The Message

1

BOOT and saddle, my yeoman tall,
And leap upon thy steed,
And unto good King Duncan's tower
Ride fast through wold and mead.

2

There slip into the stall, and wait
Till thee the groom hath spied.
Ask him: 'Of Duncan's daughters twain
Which busks her now for bride?'

3

And if he say: 'The Brown one 'tis,'
That news bring like the blast.
But if he say: 'The Fair one 'tis,'
Thou need'st not spur so fast.

4

But get thee to the ropemaker,
And buy me one stout cord,
And, slowly riding, bring it me,
Thou need'st not speak a word.

VIII

The Homebringing

1

I GO not alone, my dainty Dear
Thou must with me travel
To the dear old horrible frowsy cell,
In the drear cold sorrowful house to dwell,
Where my Mother squats by the narrow door,
At watch till her Son come home once more.

2

'Let go thy grasp, thou grisly man!
Who has called thee hither?
Ice are thy hands, hot reeks thy breath,
Thine eyes red brands, thy cheeks like death;—
But I'd be merry and take delight
In scent of roses, and sunshine bright.'

3

Leave breathing the roses, leave shining the sun,
My dainty Sweeting!
Don for bridal attire the white wavering veil,
And pluck from the lyre one long quavering wail,
And a nuptial song thou shalt sing to me;
The night-wind whistles the melody.

IX

Don Ramiro

1

'DONNA Clara! Donna Clara!
Loved long years with burning passion!
Thou hast then decreed my ruin,
And decreed it without pity.

2

'Donna Clara! Donna Clara!
Sweet the gift Life gives the living;
But below the earth dwells horror,
In the cold grave, dark and grisly.

3

'Donna Clara! smile—wilt bid me
To thy wedding, when to-morrow
At the altar Don Fernando
Hails thee as his married consort?'

4

'Don Ramiro! Don Ramiro!
In my ear thy words are bitter,
Bitterer than the stars have spoken,
Mocking all my feeble wishes.

5

'Don Ramiro! Don Ramiro!
Come, shake off this gloomy sorrow;
On the earth are many maidens,
But us two hath God divided.

6

'Don Ramiro, thou so valiant,
Who hast vanquished Moors so many,
Vanquish now thyself I charge thee,—
Come to-morrow to my wedding.'

7

'Donna Clara! Donna Clara!
Ay, I swear I'll come to-morrow!
Dance with thee a wedding measure,—
So good-night! I'll come to-morrow.'

8

'Then good-night!'—The casement rattled.
'Neath it long, as turned to marble,
Stood Ramiro—long stood sighing;
But at last in gloom he vanished.

9

And at last, their long strife ended,
Night must yield to Day, the victor;
Like a garden gay with blossoms,
Broadly stretching, lies Toledo.

10

Palaces and splendid mansions
In the sunlight brightly glitter,
And the high domes of the churches
Proudly shine, as they were gilded.

11

Like a swarm of bees loud humming
Peal the bells with festal chiming;
Heavenward from God's holy houses
Hymns of praise are sweetly rising.

12

But behold! behold! There yonder,
There from out the Market-Chapel,
Streams a gay-clad crowd of people,
Swarming like a moving ant-hill.

13

Shining knights and fine-drest ladies,
Footmen in their liveries gorgeous,
While the clear-voiced bells are pealing,
And between-whiles booms the organ.

14

But, their way with reverence opened,
'Mid the people, hand in hand, go
Bride and Groom, in festal splendour,
Donna Clara, Don Fernando.

15

To the Bridegroom's palace-portal
Rolls this concourse of the people;
There begins the wedding revel,
Pompous, after ancient custom.

16

Tournament to merry banquet
Changes amid loud applauses;
Swift the hours on sounding pinions
Fly, until the night has fallen.

17

Then the wedding-guests assemble
In the ball-room for the dances;
Splendid garments, many-coloured,
In the gleaming torchlight sparkle.

18

On the dais Bride and Bridegroom
In their chairs of state are sitting,
Donna Clara, Don Fernando,
Talk of lovers gently whispering.

19

Through the ball-room, blithely eddying,
Heave the shimmering human wavelets,
While the drums are throbbing loudly,
And the brazen trumpets braying.

20

'Wherefore turns my lovely Lady
Evermore her wandering glances
Toward yon corner of the ball-room?'
So the wondering Bridegroom asks her.

21

'Seest thou not, O Don Fernando,
There, that man in sable mantle?'
But the Knight said, gently smiling:
'Nay, 'tis nothing but a shadow.'

22

But the shadow moved, drew nearer,
'Twas a man in sable mantle;
Clara looked, and knew Ramiro,
Whom, with one hot blush, she greeted.

23

Now the ball was just beginning,
Briskly were the dancers going,
In the waltz's giddy circles,
Till the floor was heaving, groaning.

24

'Gladly, certes, Don Ramiro,
Will I join the dancers with thee;
Though in such a night-black mantle
'Twas not courteous to come hither.'

25

With his piercing eyes that moved not,
Clasping her, with gloomy whisper,
Gazed Ramiro on the Fair-One:
'Thou didst say it: I *must* come hither!'

26

At the word plunged the two dancers
In the dance's wildest mazes;
While the drums were throbbing loudly,
And the brazen trumpets braying.

27

'White, as white as snow, thy cheeks are!'
Strangely shuddering, whispered Clara.
'Thou didst say it: I *must* come hither!'
Dully rang Ramiro's answer.

28

And amid the surging concourse
In the ball-room blinked the tapers;
While the drums were throbbing loudly,
And the brazen trumpets braying.

29

'Cold as ice, methinks, thy hands are!'
Crisped with horror, Clara whispered,
As they rushed into the whirlpool:
'Thou didst say it: I *must* come hither!'

30

'Oh, thy breath reeks of the graveyard!
Loose me! Loose me! Don Ramiro!'
And again those words mysterious:
'Thou didst say it: I *must* come hither!'

31

And the floor is smoking, glowing,
Merrily viol sounds and fiddle;
Like a web of mad enchantment
All things in the room grow dizzy.

32

Still she wails amid the maelstrom:
'Loose me! Loose me! Don Ramiro!'
Don Ramiro still makes answer:
'Thou didst say it: I *must* come hither!'

33

'In the name of God, begone then!'
Clara cried with voice imperious,
And that word was hardly spoken
Ere had vanished Don Ramiro.

34

Veiled in darkness, coldly shivering,
Clara stared, death in her visage;
Down into her gloomy kingdom
Swoon hath drawn the life-like image.

35

But at last the cloudy slumber
Fled—at last her lids she opened;
Then once more in sheer amazement
Her sweet eyes were shut from seeing.

36

Still beside her sits the Bridegroom,
From her seat she has not risen;
And the anxious Knight is asking,
While the dance is just beginning:

37

'Tell me why thy cheek so blanches,
Why thine eye so changes colour?'
'And Ramiro?'—stammers Clara,
Then her tongue grows dumb with horror.

38

But the Bridegroom's brows are sternly
Bent in a dark frown upon her.
'Lady, crave not news of bloodshed—
For at noon died Don Ramiro.'

X

Belshazzar

TO midnight now the night drew on,
In slumber dumb lay Babylon.

The King's House only was all aflare,
For the King's wild crew were at revel there.

And there on high in his royal hall
Belshazzar held royal festival.

The satraps were marshalled in glittering line,
And emptied their goblets of sparkling wine.

The goblets they clinked, and the satraps' hurrays
In the ears of the stiffed-neckëd King rang his praise.

The King's hot cheeks were with revel dyed;
The wine had swollen his heart with pride.

Blind madness his haughty spirit spurred,
And he slandered the Godhead with sinful word.

And swelling in pride he blasphemed, the crowd
Of servile courtiers applauding loud.

The King commanded with haughty stare;
The slave was gone, and again was there.

Much ware of gold on his head bore he,
The spoil of Jehovah's sanctuary.

And the King took hold of a sacred cup
With his impious hand, and they filled it up.

And he drank to the bottom in one deep draught,
And loud, the foam on his lips, he laughed :

' Jehovah, eternally scorned be thou—
I, King of Babylon, pledge thee now ! '

But scarce had the awful word been said
When the King's heart withered in secret dread.

The yelling laughter was stifled all,
And corpse-like still did wax the hall.

And lo ! on the whited wall there came
The likeness of a man's hand in flame.

And wrote, and wrote in letters of flame,
Wrote, wrote, and vanished, and no more came.

The King stark-staring sat, a-quail,
With weak knees knocking, and face death-pale.

And chill with horror sat all ; none stirred,
They sat like statues, without a word.

The magians came, but none of them all
That flaming scripture could read on the wall.

But, in that same night of his vaunting vain,
By his satraps' hand was Belshazzar slain.

XI

The Minnesingers

1

TO the Singers' Tourney striding
Come the Minnesingers now;
Strange the contest for deciding,
Strange the tournament, I vow!

2

Foaming wild, Imagination
Is the Minnesinger's steed,
Art for shield, he takes his station,
With the Word for sword at need.

3

From the tapestried balcóny
Lovely Damosels look down;
Not the Maid for whom alone he
Who best sings would prize the crown.

4

Other champions, lightly springing
To the lists, come hale and sound;
But the Minnesingers bringing
In each heart a deadly wound.

5

Who can set the song-blood welling
Till his heart's last wealth outdrips;
He is victor there, compelling
Noblest praise from loveliest lips.

XII

The Window-Glance

1

PALE Heinrich he came sauntering by,
Fair Hedwig leaned from her garret.
'God keep me safe!' she said with a sigh,
'Yon lad looks pale as a spirit!'

2

The lad his languishing eyes from below
Uplifted to Hedwig's garret.
They filled fair Hedwig with lovers' woe,
She too grew pale as a spirit.

3

Fair Hedwig, hurt with love's secret harms,
Looked daily down from her garret.
But soon she lay nightly in Heinrich's arms,
When wanders each churchyard spirit.

XIII

The Wounded Knight

1

I KNOW an old-world story,
Of burden dull and drear:
There lies a Knight love-wounded,
Though faithless is his fere.

2

As faithless must he contemn her,
His heart's Love belov'd in vain;
As shameful now must he reckon
His own fond heart's love-pain.

3

Oh might he in lists ride boldly,
Fling challenge to every knight:
'Who finds in my Love one blemish
With me to the death must fight!'

4

Then all would be put to silence,
Save only his own deep smart;
Then his good lance must he level
'Gainst his own lamenting heart.

XIV

The Voyage

1

I STOOD and leant upon the mast
And counted every wave.
Farewell, my beautiful Fatherland!
Fast sails my bark so brave!

2

My fair Love's house, I passed it by,
The window-panes were glaring;
I gazed my eyes out of my head,
But none made sign of caring.

3

O tears, come not into mine eyes,
Lest ye should dim their seeing!
My sick heart, break not in my breast
With woe too vast for being!

XV

The Song of Remorse

1

SQUIRE Ulrich rides through the woodland green,
The leaves they rustle cheerily.
A fair Maid, peeping the boughs between,
He spies there, lurking eerily.

2

'Ah!' says the Squire, 'I know it well,
That form so blooming and glowing,
It lures me ever in field and fell,
And where men are coming and going.

3

'Twin roses charm in each tempting lip,
Fresh as at first I've seen them:
But ugly and bitter words will slip
Spitefully oft between them.

4

'A pretty rosebud seems to mine eye
That small mouth, made for kissing,
But snakes that sting are lurking sly
Under the rosebush, hissing.

5

'That dimple sweet, like a tiny dell
In cheeks most fair in fashion,
That is the pit wherein I fell,
Driven by delirious passion.

6

'What woe those curls of her beautiful hair
On that beautiful head have wrought me!
The magic meshes of the snare
Wherein the Devil caught me.

7

'That blue eye, clear as a crystal well,
I took for the gate of heaven;
But found indeed 'twas the gate of hell
I entered, passion-driven.'—

8

Squire Ulrich rides through the woods away,
The leaves are drearily sighing.
He sees far off a Phantom grey,
Forlorn, and pale as the dying.

9

'Oh,' cries the Squire, 'dear Mother mine,
With love from thy Son ne'er straying,
How have I vexed that heart of thine
With evil doing and saying!

10

'Oh, would I might dry the tears from thine eyes
With the burning smart of my sorrow!
To flush thy pale cheek, would my blood suffice,
My heart's blood thou might'st borrow!

11

And further rideth Squire Ulrich now,
The woods are darker growing,
Strange voices arise from blade and bough,
The evening winds are blowing.

12

The Squire is ware of his own words
Like wandering echoes ringing,
'Tis the mocking mirth of the woodland birds
That warble, loudly singing:

13

'Squire Ulrich sings a pretty song,
The Song of Remorseful Sorrow,
To-day to its end though he sing that Song,
He'll sing it again to-morrow.'

XVI

To a fair Singer

Singing an old Ballad

1

THAT fair Enchantress I remember—
As first I saw her now I see!
How her blithe notes, the charmed air winging,
Set in my heart strange echoes ringing!
Fast fell my tears at her sweet singing.
I knew not what had hapt to me.

2

A dream came hovering o'er my spirit;
Methought I was once more a child,
And spellbound, by the lamp's dim glory,
In Mother's blessed room once more I
Sat brooding o'er some grand old story,
While the drear night-wind whistled wild.

3

The old legends came to life before me,
Old Knights arose from out the grave;
Fierce is the fight at Roncevalles,
To aid the Cross Childe Roland sallies,
And many a good sword round him rallies,
There too rides Ganelon the knave.

4

Through him lies Roland evil-bedded,
He swims in blood, with gasping breath ;
Scarce may his horn's loud blast, far-pealing,
Thrill to great Charles's ear, when, reeling
With bursten heart he sinks, past healing,—
And my fair dream dies with his death.

5

It was a loud discordant clamour
That called me back from dreamland so.
The ballad sung, the people clapping,
And on the benches madly rapping,
With cries of ' Brava ! ' broke my napping ;
There was the Singer, curtsying low.

XVII

The Song of the Ducats

1

DEAR my golden ducats, pray
Whither have ye stoln away?

2

Are ye with the golden fishlings
That in streamlets, briskly, blithely,
Leap and plunge again so lithely?

3

Are ye with the golden flowerets,
That in green delightful meadows
Gleam through morning's dews and shadows?

4

Are ye with the golden birdies,
That, enmeshed in sunny splendour,
Wing the wide air, blue and tender?

5

Are ye with the golden starlets
That in myriads, beaming brightly,
Smile from heaven's abysses nightly?

6

Ye, alas! my golden ducats,
Swim not in the streamlet's wave,
Gleam not in the meadows green,
Wing not the blue air serene,
Smile not from heaven's glimmering cave!
'Tis my greedy duns, I trow,
Grip you in their talons now.

XVIII

Amoebaean on Paderborn Heath

1

HEAR you not the distant sounding
Of the double-bass and fiddle?
There goes many a beauty, bounding
In the long dance down the middle.

2

'Nonsense, man! Your brain is reeling!
Fiddles thus the air affronting?
I but hear young pigs a-squealing,
I but hear the old sow grunting.'

3

Hark! the huntsmen blithely chasing
Through the woods with wood-horns braying—
Silly lambs I see there grazing;
Shepherds on their pipes are playing.

4

'Nonsense, man! Your ears are humming!
Shepherds playing? Huntsmen striving?
I but see the swineherd coming,
Home his herd of sows a-driving.'

5

Hear you not that far-off singing,
Rival choirs the Lord belauding?
Sweet and clear the tones out-ringing,
Angels with their wings applauding.

6

'Rival choirs! You're dazed completely!
'Tis no choir-match, my dear fellow.
'Tis two gooseboys sing so sweetly,
Driving home their goslings yellow.'

7

Hear you not the bells far-pealing,
Heavenly sweet with clang sonorous?
Pious folk with reverent feeling
Seek that village church before us.

8

'Nonsense, man! Their neck-bells chiming,
Cows to their dark stalls are trooping;
Gently swaying to the timing
Of their feet, their heads go, drooping.'

9

See you not that white veil waving?
Shyly beckoning, softly weeping,
Her sad eyes my comfort craving,
There my Love her tryst is keeping.

10

'Nonsense, man! Your weeping witch is
But the woodwife, poor old Lisa;
Pale and lean she limps on crutches
To yon field—nor becks nor sees you.'

11

Well, my friend, laugh on, make merry
O'er my wandering wits' confusion!
Will you tell me all I carry
In my breast is mere delusion?

XIX

A Life-Greeting

Album Verses

1

A GREAT high-road is our earth indeed,
We men are but wayfarers :
We run and we ride, afoot or on steed,
As lackeys or message-bearers.

2

We pass on our way, we bow and we greet,
As our coaches fly hither and thither,
To kiss and hold to our hearts were sweet,
But away run the horses elsewhither.

3

We've scarcely met at each wayside inn,
My dearest Prince Alexander,
When the parting post-horn makes woeful din,
And straightway blows us asunder.

XX

The Truth of it

WHEN Springtime comes, and the sun shines bright,
With blossom and bud the young flowers are gay;
When the moon goes forth on her shining way
The stars swim after her through the night:
When the singer sees two sweet little eyes
From the deep of his spirit glad songs arise;—
Yet songs and stars, and sweet spring flowers,
And eyes, and moonlight, and sunny hours,
Howe'er delightful be such stuff,
To make a world 'tis not near enough.

SONNETS

Sonnet-Garland to A. W. von Schlegel

I

THE deadliest snake : Doubt's dagger in your flank,
The deadliest poison : of your own powers despair,
Which my life's marrow with gnawing fang would tear ;
I was a twig, whose prop untimely sank.
Thou didst bewail that poor twig, prostrate there,
Thy kind word nerved it to regain its rank ;
And thee, my noble Master, must I thank,
If ever flowers that feeble twig shall bear.
Oh, might'st thou tend it still, its careful warden,
Till, grown a tree, it may adorn the garden
Of that fair Muse who chose thee her favourite.
That garden's tale my nurse crooned many a night :
There strange, sweet, magic sounds are always ringing,
The flowers can speak, the trees ne'er cease from singing.

II

IN stiff hooped-petticoats, with flowers brocaded,
With beauty-spots upon her cheeks bepainted,
On lace-trimmed, sharp-toed shoes 'enskied and sainted',
With wasp-like waist, and hair in towers thick-braided:
Even so the Pseudo-Muse her charms paraded,
What time she lured thee to her bosom tainted;
But thou didst wander by strange paths, acquainted
With dark desires, far from her alleys faded.
There in the ancient wilderness thou foundest
A castle, where in magic slumber soundest
Lay a fair maid, more sweet than sculptures Attic;
Soon fled the charm; for, at thy kiss awaking,
Rose the pure German Muse, her smiles out-breaking,
And sank upon thy breast in love ecstatic.

III

UNSATISFIED with thine own heritage,
Rhine must appease thee with his Niblungs' hoard;
Thames in thy lap his wondrous gifts hath poured,
Flowers plucked from Tagus' banks enrich thy page.
Gems dug from Tiber on thy shelves are stored,
And Seine to thy renown must yield her wage,—
Thou hast forced the sanctuary of Brahma sage,
And pearls must Ganges proffer to her lord.
Too covetous man, I rede thee be content
With what to mortal was but seldom lent;
On spending now, not getting, ponder thou.
And with that wealth together dragged by thee
From North and South, with tireless industry,
Make rich thy joyful heir, the scholar, now!

To my Mother, B. Heine
née v. Geldern

I

MY wont it is to carry my head high,
My temper stern and tough yields no man place;
If even the King should look me in the face,
I would not therefore straight cast down mine eye.
Yet, dearest Mother, I say it openly:
How high soever pride my spirit may raise,
A trembling reverence doth my pride abase
In thy sweet homelike presence, I scarce know why.
Is it thy spirit mine to subjection brings,
Thy lofty spirit, brave to explore all things,
And soar to heaven on its light-shedding wings?
How aches my heart when Memory sums the score
Of all my faults, that have thy heart made sore,
Thy gentle heart, which loved me all the more!

II

IN my mad folly once, deserting thee,
To the world's end would I roam like the wind,
To see if Love anywhere I might find,
And clasp him close in passion's ecstasy.
In every street I sought Love anxiously,
At every door stretched, like a beggar blind,
My hand, for paltriest love-dole, to my kind;
Cold hate instead, laughing, all proferred me.
And ever after Love I wandered, ever
Seeking but Love; yet Love could I find never,
And home again came sick and sorrow-fraught.
But thou didst come to meet me there, and oh
What then suffused thine eyes with tender woe
Was Love, sweet Love, that I so long had sought!

To H. S.

On reading his pamphlet on the revival of old German art

OPENING your book in haste, with eager eye,
Many a familiar picture greeted me,
Beheld long since—a golden memory
Of boyish dreams, of childhood's days gone by.
Again the minster proudly flouts the sky,
By German faith built once, its pledge to be:
I hear the bells, the organ solemnly
Peals, while the old love complaining seems to sigh.
I see how, clambering round that minster fast,
The nimble dwarfs in impish frolic dare
To smash from it the floral sculpture fair.
Yet you may strip the oak, till each rude blast
With its green pomp of leaves bestrew the plain,
Comes a new Spring, 'twill robe itself again.

Fresco-Sonnets to Christian Sethe

I

I'LL not chime in, I'll burn no incense, I,
To blocks gilded without, within, mere sand;
I will not grasp each booby's proffered hand
Who tears my name to pieces on the sly;
Nor bow before that painted harlotry
Who shameless flaunt their shame through all the land;
I'll not fall in with the dull mob who stand
Self-yoked to their godlings' cars of victory.
Yet well I know the oak must prostrate fall,
While the slim reed, by pliant bending o'er
The stream in rain and storm, stands as before.
But say, how fare these reedlings after all?
What is their fate? As canes, to serve some dandy,
For 'Boots', in dusting clothes, to come in handy.

II

GIVE me a mask, I'll join the masquerade,
Playing the knave that charlatans I see,
Flaunting in gaudy robes of dignity,
May count me not a craftsman of their trade.
Come vulgar words and manners to my aid,
In popular art I'll take my base degree,
All those rare sparks of genius banned shall be,
Wherewith stale rogues of late fine tricks have played.
And thus will I dance at the grand masqued-ball,
'Mid German knights, monks, kings in motley crew,
Capped to by Harlequin, known to but few,
With their blunt swords of lath cudgelled by all.
That is their sport. Should I unmask, beware!
I should dumbfounder every jail-bird there.

III

I LAUGH at each dull bore, taste's parasite
Who stares upon me with his goatish eyes ;
And those raw freshmen, lean as hungry flies,
Who gape and sniff at me in petty spite.
I laugh, too, at those apes, whose learning trite
Puffs them with pride to pose as critics wise ;
And at those dastard rogues, my enemies,
'Gainst poisoned weapons daring me to fight.
Yet when Joy's nosegay of delightful things
Is shattered for us by the hand of Fate,
And at our feet flung withered, without scent,
And when the heart within the breast is rent,
Rent, and stabbed through, sore-wounded, desperate—
What 's left us but the laugh that shrilly rings?

IV

A STRANGE Tale haunts my brain with elvish spell,
And in that Tale an elvish Song rings gay,
And in that Song lives, blooms, floats like a fay,
A fresh young Maid, and wondrous fair as well ;
And in that Maid a tiny Heart doth dwell,
Yet to that Heart Love never found his way,
Pride only and arrogance have come to sway
That nature, loveless as an icicle.
Hark how my head rings with that Tale accurst !
That horrible Song booms on relentlessly,
That Maiden titters low and soft ! Alack !
I only fear my tortured head will burst,—
And oh, how sad—dreadfully sad, 'twould be,
Should but my reason leave the beaten track !

V

IN the still evening hours, tender with woe,
I hear the songs whose tones long since have fled,
And down my cheek steal the fond tears I shed,
And from my heart's old wound fresh blood will flow.
As in a magic mirror's depth, even so
I see once more my Love's form imagèd;
There at her work she sits in bodice red,
And round her reigns the old peace of long ago.
Then suddenly she rises from her chair,
And clips from her fair head the loveliest lock,
And gives it me—that joy scares like a shock.
Mephisto turns my joy to sick despair;
A tough rope span he from that curl so dear,
And with it hauls me round this many a year.

VI

'WHEN last I saw you, after twelve months' woe,
That hour of welcome brought my lips no bliss,'
I said; and then, prest in the sweetest kiss,
The dearest rosy lips on mine did glow.
And from her myrtle in the window, lo!
Smiling she plucked a twig, and said: 'Take this,
And plant it in fresh earth, green as it is,
Under a glass'—then motioned me to go.
That 's an old tale. The twig died in its pot,
Herself all these long years I have met no more;
Yet in my brain burns that kiss ne'er forgot,
And lately it drove me back from far away
To my Love's house. I watched beside her door
All night, and went only when broke the day.

VII

BEWARE, my friend, of spiteful devils' grimaces,
Though worse you'll find the meek young angels' smile.
One vowed she'd kiss me in her sweetest style;
But when I came her sharp claws left sore traces.
Beware, my friend, of old black-cats' grim faces,
Though white young kittens are more full of guile;
I made one once my Sweetheart for a while,
But sore she scratched my heart in our embraces.
Oh sweetest minx, while with your sweet spell smitten
How could your shining eyes lie with such art?
How could your little paw so rend my heart?
Oh wondrous tender paws of my white kitten!
Would that my glowing lips on you were feeding,
Though all the while my heart were bleeding, bleeding

VIII

WHEN Poverty at last left free my road,
My brush in feats of art need fear no scorn,
Proud walls of church and castle I could adorn
With charming pictures, whose bright colours glowed
What golden alms into my fob had flowed,
Could I flute, fiddle, strum keyboard, night and morn,
Make music, thrilling hearts with subtle thorn,
Till squires and dames, loud-clapping, fame bestowed.
Alas! great Mammon never smiled on me,
Worse luck! I served a Mistress more divine,
Most profitless of Muses, Poesy!
Alas! when, tossing off bright bumpers quick,
My comrades pledge the gods in sparkling wine,
There must I thirsting sit, or—quaff on tick!

IX

A TORTURE-CHAMBER was the world to me,
Where by the feet they hung me, in torture sore ;
For, with hot pincers, nerves and flesh they tore,
And joints with iron clamps crushed horribly.
Wildly I screamed—what words that agony
Could tell? From eyes and mouth oozed rills of gore ;—
Then came a maid, a golden mace she bore,
And struck the mercy-stroke, to set me free.
Curiously she watched the tongue from my red mouth
Loll out, in the death-struggle, to quench its drouth,
My cramped limbs, in their death-dance writhe and start.
Curiously heard she my still-groaning heart ;
My death-rattle was music to her ear,
As, with cold smile of mockery, she stood near.

X

THOU hast seen me oft fight many a treacherous foe,
Spectacled puppies, painted cats, false hags,
Who my fair name would gladly tear to rags,
And gladly with sly tongue-thrusts lay me low.
How pedants bore me all day long you know,
How from each zany's bells the noise ne'er flags,
How round my heart coil snakes with poison-bags,
How from my thousand wounds the blood-streams flow.
But you, like a strong tower, stood ever fast,
Your head my beacon in the storm's wild blast,
My harbour sure your faithful heart has been.
Though round that harbour waves rage furiously,
And ships but few may fetch it from the sea,
Once you are there you sleep safe and serene.

XI

FAIN would I weep, and yet, I cannot weep,
Fain would I strongly lift myself on high,
But cannot rise; still to the ground cling I,
Croaked, hissed at by all sickening worms that creep.
Around my life's glad light fain would I sweep,
Round my fair Love soaring eternally,
Breathing the blissful air of her sweet sky—
My sick heart breaks, from earth I cannot leap.
Still from my broken heart the hot blood flows,
I feel it, feel myself faint and grow numb,
Before mine eyes all things grow dusky grey;
And with strange dread I sigh myself away
To yonder cloudy realm where shadows dumb
With soft arms clasp me lovingly and close.

LYRICAL INTERMEZZO

1822–1823

Prologue

1

THERE once was a Knight, oh so dismal and dumb!
His cheeks were hollow and haggard;
And sauntering along he would tottering come,
Bemused with dull dreams, poor laggard.
So blocklike he was, so clumsy, so daft,
The flowers and young girls all around him they laughed,
As by them he stumbled and staggered.

2

Crept home, in the darkest nook he would hide
From all men, in solitude utter.
There longing he stretched his arms and sighed,
Yet not a word would he mutter.
But when midnight fell on that lonely man,
A marvellous ringing and singing began—
Then—a knock set his heart in a flutter.

3

And in his Truelove doth silently glide,
In her foam-robe's murmuring mazes,
She blooms like a rosebud, she glows like a bride,
With jewels her white veil blazes.
Her hair around her sheds golden light,
Her eyes allure him with might—sweet might—
They sink in each others' embraces.

4

With passion his Love in his arms he takes,
How kindles this block in the fire!
This pale thing is glowing, the dreamer awakes,
The shy man grows truly no shyer.
But, still tormenting him roguishly,
Her white veil over his head flings she,
With its diamonds like dew on a briar.

5

To a crystal palace, the waters below,
The Knight is charmed in a twitter.
He marvels, his eyes are bedazzled so,
With all the glamour and glitter.
But his Nymph's white arms are around him tied,
The Knight is bridegroom, the Kelpie is bride,
Her damsels play on the zither.

6

They play and they sing, and they sing so sweet,
And move in the dance's wild mazes;
The Knight's dazed senses have left their seat,
Locked fast in his Love's embraces.—
Then out at once all the lights have gone,
Round his poet's den in his house alone
The Knight forlornly gazes.

I

1

IN the sweet marvellous month of May,
When all the buds were springing,
There in my heart among them
New-born I found Love singing.

2

In the sweet marvellous month of May,
When all the birds were singing,
I told her all the longings
That my fond heart were wringing.

II

1

OUT of my tears there burgeon
More flowers than bloom in the vales,
And all my sighs are turned to
A choir of nightingales.

2

And if thou dost love me, Sweetheart,
To thee all my flowers I'll bring,
And songs evermore at thy window
The nightingale shall sing.

III

THE rose, and the lily, the sun, and the dove,
I once loved them all with a rapturous love.
I love them no more, for I love alone one,
My wee one, my coy one, my pure one, my own one
Herself, the fountain of every love,
Is rose, and lily, and sun, and dove.

IV

1

WHENE'ER I gaze into thine eyes
My pain departs, my sorrow flies;
But when thy sweet shy lips I kiss,
I am made whole in utter bliss.

2

And when I lean upon thy breast
'Tis heaven's own joy, 'tis heaven's own rest;
But when thou sayest: 'I love but thee!'
Then must I weep—weep bitterly.

V

1

THY face belov'd, thy lovely face
In dreams of late hath brought me grace,
So gentle, so angelical,
And yet so pale, with woe so pale.

2

Thy lips alone keep their warm hue;
But pale has Death soon kissed them too,
And soon is quenched the heavenly light
That from thy gentle eyes gleamed bright.

VI

1

LAY thy soft cheek against my cheek,
Our tears in one stream outgushing!
And to my heart press close thy heart,
Their flames in one flame outrushing!

2

And into that mighty flame when flows
The tide of our tear-drops burning,
And when in my arms I have clasped thee close—
I'll die of pure love-yearning!

VII

1

SO deep will I plunge my spirit
In the lily's chalice white,
The lily shall murmur, sighing,
A song of my Heart's Delight.

2

That song shall quiver and tremble
Timidly as the kiss,
That once from her mouth she gave me
In a wonderful hour of bliss.

VIII

1

THE stars far off in heaven
Stand motionless up there,
Thousands of years they gaze on
Each other in love's despair.

2

They speak a wondrous language
That is most rich and grand;
Yet none of our learnèd professors
That language can understand.

3

But I so well have learnt it,
Each word in my heart lives on;
For I have used as my grammar
The face of my Dearest One.

IX

1

ON wings of song, Belov'd One,
Away I'll waft thee, to where
I know in the plains of the Ganges
A secret nook most fair.

2

There sleeps a rich-blossoming garden,
Calm in the still moonlight:
The lotus-flowers are awaiting
Their dearest Sister to-night.

3

The violets laugh as they prattle,
And gaze on the stars in their spheres;
Odorous legends the roses
Breathe low in each others' ears.

4

There bound, and stand shyly listening,
The gentle timid gazelles;
Afar, from the sacred river,
The waves' deep murmur swells.

5

There, under the palms reclining,
We'll drink, by the sacred stream,
Of love and rest in full measure,
And blissful dreams will we dream.

X

1

THE lotus-flower in torment
Shrinks from the sun's fierce light,
Her drooping head on her bosom,
She dreams while she waits for the night

2

The moon-god is her lover,
She wakes in his gentle rays,
To him she frankly unveileth
Her innocent flower-face.

3

She blooms and glows and glistens,
And, dumbly gazing above,
Breathes odour, and weeps, and trembles
For love and the pangs of love.

XI

1

IN the Rhine, the beautiful river,
Mirrored within the stream,
Köln, the great holy city,
And its cathedral gleam.

2

There hangs in the cathedral
A picture limned on gold;
Through my life's desert shining
My heart it has oft consoled.

3

There hover flowers and angels
Around Our Lady dear;
The eyes, lips, cheeks of my Dearest
Are imaged divinely here.

XII

1

YOU love me not, you love me not,
That irks me not a tittle;
To look on you such joy has brought
I envy kings but little.

2

You hate me—hate me, well I wis,
Your rosy lips declare it;
Give me those charming lips to kiss,
For comfort, I can bear it.

XIII

1

O KISS me only, do not swear,
All women's oaths I count but air!
Your words are sweet, but sweeter still
That kiss I took against your will!
I keep it, trust it too till death,
A vow's but smoke and empty breath.

. . . . . .

O swear, my dearest girl, swear on,
I'll trust thee on thy word alone!
And when I sink upon thy breast,
Firmly believe that I am blest;
Dear, I'll believe thy love for me
Long will outlast eternity.

XIV

UPON my Belov'd One's eyes that speak
I make the prettiest ballads.
Upon my Belov'd One's mouth so meek
I make the daintiest triads.
Upon my Belov'd One's rosy cheek
I make the lordliest stanzas ;
And had she a dear little heart, upon it
I'd make for my Darling a dear little sonnet.

XV

1

THE world is dull, the world is blind,
Each day its bad taste increases !
Of you, my Fair One, it speaks its mind,
And picks your good name to pieces.

2

The world is dull, the world is blind,
Your virtues to vices turning ;
It knows not how sweet your kisses I find,
What bliss they bring with their burning.

XVI

1

DEAREST, you to-day shall tell me
Are you not a shape of dream
That on sultry days of Summer
From the poet's brain will teem?

2

Nay, that little mouth so charming,
Eyes a-shine with witcheries,
Such a sweet and darling Maiden,
Poet ne'er made things like these.

3

Ugly vampires, cockatrices,
Dragons huge, and monsters dire—
Such uncanny beasts of fable
Sprang from the poetic fire.

4

But yourself, your freakish malice,
Your sweet face, your moods that tease,
Your demurely modest glances—
Poet ne'er made things like these

XVII

1

RADIANT as the foam-born Venus,
Gleams my Love in beauty's pride,
For a strange man, come between us,
Claims her as his chosen bride.

2

Heart, my heart, thou much enduring,
Murmur not at Fate's decree;
Bear it, pardon what 's past curing—
What, sweet fool, she has done to thee.

XVIII

1

I CHIDE thee not, though breaks my heart o'erfraught,
My Love, for ever lost! I chide thee not.
Though round thee gleam the diamond's freezing light,
There falls no ray into thy heart's deep night.

2

I have known it long. I saw thee once in dream,
In thy heart's void saw night without a beam,
And saw the snake that feeds upon thy heart,
I saw, my Love, how wretched still thou art.

XIX

1

YES, thou art wretched, and I chide thee not;—
My Love, we twain must still most wretched be
Till Death have broken our sick hearts o'erfraught,
My Love, we two must still most wretched be.

2

I see thy lips writhe in a bitter jest,
I see thine eyes that flash disdainfully,
And see the pride that heaves thy heaving breast,—
And wretched still thou art, wretched as I.

3

A hidden pain quivers thy lips around,
And tears repress dim thine eyes' brilliancy,
Thy bosom proudly bears a secret wound,—
My Love, our doom is wretched still to be.

XX

1

WELL, here 's fine fiddling and fluting,
And trumpets braying, I vow!
In there my Heart's Darling is footing
Her wedding measure now.

2

And here 's fine bleating and droning
Of drum and reed-pipe shrill;
Meanwhile with sobbing and groaning
Good Angels answer still.

XXI

1

SO thou hast forgotten utterly
That I so long held thy heart in fee,
That heart so small and so false, and so sweet,
None sweeter, none falser did ever beat:

2

And thou hast forgotten the love and grief
That have crushed my heart like a trampled leaf,
I know not if love were greater than woe,
But only that both were immense I know!

XXII

1

IF only those fairies, the flowers,
My heart's deep wound could know,
They'd weep with me tears in showers,
To heal my bitter woe.

2

And knew but the nightingales there,
How sorry and sick I be,
They'd peal from their leafy vales there
Glad songs to comfort me.

3

And knew they how sore my pining,
The golden stars up there
Would come from their heaven, shining,
To solace my despair.

4

They none of them know nor lament it,
One only knows my heart's pain:
And she herself has rent it,
Has rent my heart in twain.

XXIII

1

OH, why are now the roses so pale,
Oh say, my Love, say why?
Why now in the grass of the greening vale
Dumb the blue violets lie?

2

Why fills the sky with such doleful sound
Yon lark aloft in air?
Why breathes the thyme from each sunny mound
A corpselike odour there?

3

Why shines the sun on the meads to-day,
So coldly, in sullen gloom?
And why is now the earth so grey
And dismal as a tomb?

4

And why am I now so sick and so drear?
My dearest Love, reply!
Oh say, my Dearest of all most dear,
Why didst thou leave me, why?

XXIV

1

THEY'VE told you many a story,
And much the affair deplored;
But of what tortures my spirit
They never breathed a word.

2

They made a great fuss about it,
And, shaking their heads, let fall
Complaints of: 'That wicked creature!'
And you have believed it all.

3

And yet the worst of all troubles
Not one of them ever guessed;
The stupidest, worst, most accurst one
I carried hid in my breast.

XXV

1

THE linden blossomed, the nightingale sang,
The sun laughed out with a kindly zest,
You kissed me, and round me your arms you flung,
And clasped me close to your heaving breast.

2

Hoarse croaked the raven, the green leaves fell,
The sun frowned greeting with sullen smile;
Then each of us frostily said: 'Farewell!'
You dropped me a curtsy in courtliest style.

XXVI

WE cared for each other as boy and maid,
Yet gave Mrs. Grundy no cause for huffing.
At 'Man and Wife' we have often played,
Yet never quarrelled or came to cuffing.
We have joked together, and shouted for glee,
And kissed and fondled most tenderly.
At last, through the woods in our childish sport
Playing hide-and-seek, like sister and brother,
We hid ourselves in such clever sort
That never again we could find each other.

XXVII

1

YOU stuck to me long with patience,
And many a good turn you've done me,
You lavished comfort upon me
In trials and tribulations.

2

With meat and drink you fed me,
And lent me some of your dollars,
And found me in shirts and collars,
And passport, and off you sped me.

3

My Dearest, may God still guard you
From heat and from cold for ever;
And for these kindnesses, never
May He with vengeance reward you!

XXVIII

1

TILL May came Earth was quite penurious,
And then grew lavishly charitable,
Now all things laugh in a joy delirious,
I too would laugh, were I only able.

2

The flowers blossom, the bells are pealing,
The birds all speak as they do in fable;
To me their speech brings no pleasant feeling,
I still find all things miserable.

3

They bore me, all the race of Adam,
Ay, even my friend, once quite tolerable;—
And all because they address as 'Madam'
My Sweetheart, so sweet and so amiable.

XXIX

1

AND while in strange lands with romantic dreams
So long I lingered, so long, it seems
My Dearest grew tired of her loneliness,
And she made for herself a wedding-dress,
And flung her tender young arms about
A bridegroom, of louts the stupidest lout.

2

My Darling is so kind and fair,
Her form before me still hovers there,
Her violet eyes, her cheeks of rose,
They glow and they blossom, come sun, come snows.
That from such a Love I could e'er have strayed
Was the stupidest prank I ever played.

XXX

THE violets blue of your sweet young eyes,
The roses red o'er your cheeks that rise,
The lilies white of your hands likewise,
They blossom and bloom in an endless Spring,
And only your heart is a withered thing.

XXXI

THE sky is so blue and the world so fair,
And the winds breathe gently, and warm is the air
And the flowers nod over green meadows there,
And glistening dewdrops of morn they wear,
And the merry-makers roam everywhere ;
And yet I would, in the grave's cold clay,
That clasped in my dead Love's arms I lay.

XXXII

1

MY sweetest Love, when in the grave
Thou liest cold in the darkness,
I'll go to thee, down to the gloomy grave,
And cling to thee in thy starkness.

2

I'll kiss thee, I'll clasp thee, I'll strain thee in sleep,
My calm Love, my cold Love, my pale Love!
I'll rave, I'll tremble, I'll gently weep,
I'll grow to clay of thy clay, Love.

3

The dead are rising, black Midnight calls,
In airy swarms they are flying;
But we two quit not the grave's four walls
Where in thy arms I am lying.

4

The dead are rising, to bale or to bliss,
At Doomsday's trumpeting gruesome;
But we two, caring for none of this,
Lie on there, bosom to bosom.

XXXIII

1

A PINE-TREE, lone in the Nor'land
Stands bleak to all winds that blow.
He slumbers ; with cold white blanket
Wrapt round by the ice and snow.

2

He dreams about a palm-tree,
Afar in an Eastern land ;
Lonely and silent mourns she
On cliffs that burn o'er the sand.

XXXIV

The Head Speaks

AH, could I but the footstool be
Whereon she rests her feet so small !
Though sore my Love should trample me,
I never should complain at all.

The Heart Speaks

Ah, could I but the cushion be
Wherein she pins and needles sticks !
However sorely pricked she me,
I'd feel but pleasure in the pricks.

The Song Speaks

Ah ! could I but the paper be
Whereof her curl-papers she makes !
And in her ear I'd secretly
Whisper what in me lives and aches.

XXXV

1

SINCE my Love has loved me not,
How to laugh I've quite forgot.
Many a dullard airs his wit,
But I cannot laugh at it.

2

Since my Love has proved untrue,
I have given up weeping too;
Grief my heart has well-nigh split,
But I cannot weep for it.

XXXVI

1

FROM woes too huge to utter
My little songs I make them;
To their sounding plumes they betake them
And off to her heart they flutter.

2

They find thee where'er thou art, Love,
But back they come to me weeping,
Still weeping, and from me keeping
What they have seen in thy heart, Love.

XXXVII

1

THE Townsfolk in Sunday splendour
Come roaming through grove and field;
And, skipping like kidlings tender,
Loud homage to Nature they yield.

2

They ogle with bats' eyes blinking
The green romance of the Spring,
With asses' ears indrinking
The songs the sparrows sing.

3

But I have hung in my room here
The windows with sable pall;
Just now my Ghosts through the gloom here
Drop in for a morning call.

4

My dead Love her tryst is keeping,
She steals from Death's cheerless croft,
She sits by me softly weeping,
And makes my heart grow soft.

XXXVIII

1

GREY visions of days forgotten
Come forth out of their grave,
And show me how once beside thee
So fondly lived I have.

2

By day I went staggering, dreaming,
From street to street around;
The people marked me with wonder
Go dumb in sorrowful stound.

3

By night, though, it was better,
The streets were clear of the throng;
Alone, myself and my shadow,
We silently wandered along.

4

With hollow-echoing footsteps
Over the bridge strolled I;
The moon from the clouds out-breaking,
Would greet me solemnly.

5

Before thy house I tarried,
And gazed up from below,
And gazed, gazed up at thy window,
My heart opprest with woe.

6

I know thou hast oft from thy window
Looked down on my despair,
And seen me in the moonlight
Stand like a pillar there.

XXXIX

1

A YOUNG man loves a maiden,
Who loves another instead;
That other loves another,
And wins her, and so they are wed.

2

The maiden is piqued, and to spite him
Goes promptly off to church
With the first good man she falls in with;
The young fellow's left in the lurch.

3

All this is an old, old story,
Yet somehow always new;
And when you're cast for the hero
Your heart just breaks in two.

XL

1

HEAR I a sweet voice trilling
A song my Dearest sang,
My heart seems bursting and thrilling
With pang on passionate pang.

2

Then drives me a gloomy yearning
Aloft where the pine-woods grow,
And there in tear-drops burning
Is loosed my infinite woe.

XLI

1

I DREAMED a dream of a Royal Maid,
Damp dews on her pale cheek shining;
We sat beneath a green linden's shade,
Our arms round each other entwining.

2

'I long not for thy father's throne,
Nor sceptre of gold, gem-laden,
I do not long for his diamond crown,
I long for thyself, sweet Maiden.'

3

'That cannot be,' she answered me,
'For in the grave I am lying,
But night by night will I come to thee,
For I love thee with love undying.'

XLII

1

WE sat in our pinnace together,
My Darling, side by side.
The night was calm, and we floated
At ease o'er the waters wide.

2

The beautiful Island of Spirits
Loomed pale in the moon's wan light;
There loveliest music sounded,
There danced the cloud-wreaths white.

3

Sweet, sweeter the music sounded,
The clouds danced over the lea;
But past the Island we drifted
Drearily out to sea.

XLIII

1

OUT of some old, old story
Comes a white beckoning hand,
And a voice of some one singing
Of an enchanted land.

2

There the tall flowers they languish
In evening's golden light,
And gaze on each others' faces,
As wedded lovers might.

3

And all the trees are speaking,
And sing as in a choir,
Like dance-tunes gush the brooklets,
Those dancers that never tire.

4

And songs of love are sounding
Ne'er heard by mortal ears,
Till sweet mysterious longing
Bemuses him who hears.

5

Ah! would I there might enter,
And fill my heart with glee,
Get rid of all my troubles,
And free and happy be!

6

Ah! that fair land of blisses
Is oft in dreams my home,
But at the earliest sunbeam
It fleets like melting foam.

XLIV

I'VE loved thee ever, and love thee still!
And went all the world to tatters,
The flame of my love it could not kill,
'Twould leap to heaven from the shatters.

XLV

1

THIS radiant summer morning
I pace the garden alone.
The flowers are whispering and talking,
But I go dumb as a stone.

2

The flowers are whispering and talking,
With pity my face they scan:
'O be not vexed with our Sister,
Thou pale-faced, sorrowful man!'

XLVI

1

MY love in its gloomy splendour
Shines with a sombre light,
A legend tragic and tender,
Told on a summer night.

2

About an enchanted garden
Two lovers go dumb and alone,
The nightingales are singing,
The moon looks down from her throne.

3

The Maiden stands like a statue,
Before her kneels the Knight;
Then comes from his wilds the Giant,
The Maiden flies in fright.

4

The Knight on the earth falls bleeding,
  The Giant goes hulking home—
When I at last am buried
  The tale to an end will come.

XLVII

1

I'M black and blue from their worrying,
  They've tortured me early and late,
Some with their love—God help me!
  The others with their hate.

2

They've poisoned the wine on my table,
  They've poisoned the bread on my plate,
Some with their love—God help me!
  The others with their hate.

3

But she who most has worried,
  And tortured and troubled—she
Has never either loved me,
  Or even hated me.

XLVIII

1

HOT Summer now is flushing
Thy cheek, dear Lady mine,
And icy Winter is freezing
That little heart of thine.

2

All this will change, believe me,
O dearest Lady mine!
The Winter thy cheeks invading,
The Summer that heart of thine.

XLIX

1

WHEN lovers part from each other,
They linger hand in hand,
And, gently weeping and sighing,
Heedless of time they stand.

2

We wept not when we parted,
Nor sighed: 'Alas!' or 'Heigho!'
Our weeping and our sighing
Came later, as you know.

L

1

THEY sat and drank tea, and to gentle
Debate upon Love turned then.
The ladies were sentimental,
Æsthetic the gentlemen.

2

'True love must be platonic,'
So spake the Councillor dry.
His Dame smiled a smile ironic,
And presently heaved a sigh.

3

Loud boomed the Canon's conclusion:
'Love should not too rudely glow,
It injures the constitution.'
The Damsel simpered: 'How so?'

4

'Ah! Love's a romantic passion!'
The Countess moaned wistfully,
And handed in gracious fashion
The Baron a cup of tea.

5

One place was left at the table,
My Darling, they sighed for you.
Of your love you'd have been able
To prattle charmingly too.

LI

1

MY songs are full of poison—
How else, then, could it be?
Thou hast poured a deadlier poison
O'er life's fresh flowers for me.

2

My songs are full of poison—
How else, then, could it be?
I carry snakes in my bosom,
And thee, my Belov'd One—thee!

LII

1

I DREAMED again the old, old dream:
A sweeter night was never,
And under a lime, in the May moon's beam,
We swore to be true for ever.

2

And there was swearing, and swearing anew,
And kissing and hugging and laughing;
To keep me to my promise true
You bit my hand in your daffing.

3

O Love, my Love, with your clear eyes grey,
My Love so fair and biteful!
Our vows were pledged in the usual way,
Your bite was more than was rightful.

LIII

1

I STOOD on the mountain-summit,
Grew sentimental there,
And sighed a thousand times over:
'Would that a bird I were!'

2

Oh were I but a swallow,
My Love, I'd fly to thee,
And build above thy window
A little nest for me.

3

And were I a nightingale, swiftly,
My Love, I'd fly to thee,
And sing my songs at thy window,
All night from the green lime-tree.

4

And if I were a booby,
I'd seek in thy heart repose;
For thou art sweet on boobies,
And healest booby woes.

LIV

1

MY carriage rumbled slowly,
Glad greenwoods on either hand,
Through flowery valleys, the sunshine
Made an enchanted land.

2

And while I sat musing and dreaming,
And thought of my Love so fair,
Around me, mopping and mowing,
Three phantoms greeted me there.

3

They skipped, and made mocking faces,
So scornful, and yet so shy,
And whirled like dust-clouds together,
And tittering whisked themselves by.

LV

1

I WEPT as I lay dreaming,
I dreamed thou wert laid in thy grave.
I woke, and my cheeks o'erstreaming,
My tears flowed wave on wave.

2

I wept as I lay sleeping,
I dreamed thou wert false to me.
I woke, and I was weeping,
And long wept bitterly.

3

I wept as I lay dreaming,
I dreamed thou wert mine again.
I woke, and my tears were streaming,
And ever they stream in vain.

LVI

1

I SEE you in dreams, and we kindly greet,
Each night as I lie a-sleeping,
I fling myself at your dainty feet,
And kiss them, sobbing and weeping.

2

You shake your fair head, and in piteous wise
Look on me with dumb appealing,
While tears like pearls from your gentle eyes
One after one come stealing.

3

With one low word for my ear alone,
You give me a wreath of willow;
I wake—that word from my heart has flown,
No wreath decks my lonely pillow.

LVII

1

HERE 'S Autumn howling and roaring,
With rain and wind-gusts wild;
Oh where this night is she waiting,
My poor affrighted child?

2

I see her lean from her window,
Alone in her little room;
Her eyes with tears o'erflowing,
She gazes into the gloom.

LVIII

1

THE autumn wind 's in the branches,
The night is damp and cold ;
My good grey cloak around me,
I ride alone through the wold.

2

And as I ride, before me
My thoughts ride on through the gloam ;
They bear me an airy journey
To my Belov'd One's home.

3

The dogs come barking, the servants
Appear with candles aflare ;
I storm the spiral staircase
With spurs that clink on the stair.

4

The cheery carpeted chamber
My heart with its fragrance warms,
And there my sweet Love awaits me—
I fly to her eager arms.

5

The wind in the leaves comes moaning,
The oak is saying, 'twould seem :
'What ails thee, thou foolish rider,
To dream such a foolish dream ?'

LIX

1

THERE falls a Star from heaven
To twinkle no more above;
I see it falling, falling:
It is the Star of Love!

2

And fast from the apple-branches
The leaves and blossoms fall.
The frolicsome winds have come hither,
And make fine sport with them all.

3

A Swan on the lake sings lonely,
And oars himself to and fro,
Then, faint and fainter singing,
Sinks to his grave below.

4

All now is dark and silent!
Leaves, flowers, are blown away,
The Star to dust has crumbled,
Sung is the Swan's last lay.

LX

1

THE Dream-god bore me to a castle vast,
Lights gleamed, and magic balms made swoon the air;
There folk in gay attire like billows passed,
Through halls perplexed in endless labyrinths there;
Seeking some exit, in pale crowds aghast,
Wringing their hands, and wailing in despair.
Maidens and knights I marked amid the throng,
As I myself was with them swept along.

2

Then suddenly I stood alone; for lo!
The multitude had vanished marvellously,
And in mad haste I hurried, all too slow,
Threading those chambers' dread perplexity.
My feet were lead, my heart was wrung with woe,
I half despaired lest exit none might be,
At last upon the utmost door I came;
Would pass—who stands before it in God's name?

3

It was my Love—there at the door stood she,
Pain on her lips, and care upon her brow,
Back I must go, her hand made sign to me;
In wrath or warning was it? I knew but how
From her sad eyes a flame shone, sweet to see,
That moved my heart and brain profoundly now.
I felt those wondrous eyes upon me beam
Sternly, yet full of love—then fled my dream.

LXI

'TWAS midnight, midnight silent and cold;
My songs were sad as I wandered the wold.
I roused the trees with my doleful ditty;
They greeted me, swaying their heads for pity.

LXII

1

AT cross-ways one lies buried,
Self-slain in an evil hour;
There one blue flower is growing,
'Tis the Poor-Sinner's-Flower.

2

I stood at the cross-ways sighing,
The night was chill and dour,
And shivering slow in the moonlight
Waved the Poor-Sinner's-Flower.

LXIII

1

WHERE I am thick darkness o'er me,
Gathering, shrouds me from the skies,
Since no more, my Love, before me
Shines the love-light in thine eyes.

2

Now, for me, no longer dawning,
Quenched are my sweet love-stars bright,
At my feet the abyss is yawning—
Take me then, eternal night!

LXIV

1

NIGHT lay upon my eyelids,
Upon my mouth lay lead,
With brain and heart stark frozen
I lay in my graveyard bed.

2

I cannot say what ages
That sleep to my senses clave,
I woke at last and listened,
One knocked upon my grave.

3

'Wilt thou not rise, my Heinrich?
Now breaks eternal day;
The dead have all arisen,
Joy dawns to last for aye.'

4

I cannot rise, my Dearest,
For blind, still blind, am I;
Mine eyes with constant weeping
Extinguished utterly.

5

'I'll kiss for thee, my Heinrich,
The blindness from thine eyes;
Thou shalt behold the angels,
And splendour of Paradise.'

6

I cannot rise, my Dearest,
It bleeds, still bleeds, deep-gored,
My heart, where thou didst stab it
With one sharp-pointed word.

7

'I'll lay so lightly, Heinrich,
My hand upon thy heart;
'Twill bleed no more for ever,
Healed will be all the smart.'

8

I cannot rise, my Dearest,
My head bleeds also—see
Where through and through I shot it,
When thou wert stolen from me.

9

'With my own hair, my Heinrich,
I'll stanch thy head's deep wound,
And back I'll press the blood-stream,
And so thy head make sound.'

10

So soft she pleaded, so tender,
The will to resist was gone;
I strove to upheave my gravestone,
And go to my Dearest One.

11

Then wide my wounds burst open,
Then furiously outbrake
From head and breast the blood-stream,
And lo!—I was awake.

LXV

1

THE dreams, so bad and bitter,
The old lilts of wicked song,
To bury now come bring me
A coffin deep and long.

2

I'd lay therein things many,
But what I'll tell to none;
This coffin must be huger
Than Heidelberg's great tun.

3

And bring me a bier to match it,
Each stout and mighty beam
Long as the bridge that crosses
By Mainz the broad Rhine-stream.

4

And bring me eke twelve giants,
  Each stronger in the spine
Than even stout St. Christoph
  In the Minster at Köln-on-Rhine.

5

The twelve shall carry this coffin,
  And sink it in the sea;
For such a mighty coffin
  No meaner grave must be.

6

And know ye why this coffin
  Is huge and heavy to move?
I've laid therein my sorrow,
  And laid therein my love.

THE RETURN HOME

1823–1824

I

1

ON my life so dark and gloomy
Once a gentle vision shone;
Now, that gentle vision vanished,
Night-o'erwhelmed I stand, alone.

2

When on children falls the darkness
Round their hearts vague terrors throng,
And, their misery to banish,
Loudly will they lilt a song.

3

I, a child driven mad, go singing
In the darkness even so;
Though my songs make dismal music,
They have eased my heart of woe.

II

1

I KNOW not if aught it presages,
That I so sad should be,
A legend from bygone ages
Comes drearily haunting me.

2

The air grows cool at eve's onset,
And gently the Rhine flows by;
One peak where lingers the sunset
Glows red in the evening sky.

3

There sits the wraith of my dreaming,
The fairest of maidens fair,
Her jewels of gold are gleaming,
She combs her golden hair.

4

With a golden comb she combs it,
And a song of gramarie
She sings, while she combs it, and combs it,
A magical melody.

5

It seizes with wildest longing
The boatman unawares;
Black reefs round his boat are thronging,
He sees not, as upward he stares.

6

At last the wild waters upspringing
Boat, boatman, whelm—in my thought;
And this with her siren singing
The Lorelei hath wrought.

III

1

MY heart, my heart is gloomy,
Though merrily shines the May;
I stand and lean on the linden
Aloft on the bastion grey.

2

Below there, lazily flowing,
The blue town-moat I see;
A boy in his boat is fishing,
And whistles carelessly.

3

Like toys, o'er the pleasant landscape,
Gleam, tiny and many-hued,
The villas, and gardens, and people,
And cattle, and meadow, and wood.

4

The girls o'er the grass are skipping,
To bleach their linen they come;
The mill-wheel scatters its jewels,
I hear the far-off hum.

5

A sentry-box by yon turret
Stands and o'erlooks the town;
There a red-coated fellow
Is pacing up and down.

6

He practises with his musket
That gleams in the sunset red,
Halts, presents arms, and shoulders—
I wish he would shoot me dead.

IV

1

I WANDER the wild wood, weeping,
The throstle sits on a bough;
She twits me, slyly cheeping:
'Wherefore so sad art thou?'

2

Thy sisters wise, the swallows,
My lassie, can answer thee;
Each one her snug nest hollows
Where my Love's windows be.

V

1

THE night is damp and stormy,
And starless is the sky;
The branches moan as I wander
The wild wood silently.

2

A distant candle glimmers
From the Forester's lonely cot,
It shall not lure me thither,
Just now things have grown too hot.

3

Uncanny and stiff as a statue,
With blind eyes that blankly gaze,
The Grandmother sits on the settle,
And never a word she says.

4

There to and fro strides cursing
The Forester's red-haired Son,
And, laughing for scorn and fury,
Flings by on the wall his gun.

5

The Daughter weeps at her spinning,
And wets with her tears the flax;
Whimpering at her feet there
Cringes her Father's *Dachs*.

VI

1

I MET by chance, as I travelled,
My Darling's whole family,
Small sister, and father, and mother,
And gladly they greeted me.

2

They asked how I was most kindly,
And said, ere I told my tale:
I was not the least bit altered,
Except that my face was pale.

3

I asked after aunts and cousins,
And many a bore of mark,
And after the little puppy
With his wheezy little bark.

4

Then after my married Sweetheart
I asked with polite *sangfroid*;
They beamed on me with the answer
That she was then in the straw.

5

With cordial congratulations
I begged them, stammeringly,
To greet her with heartiest good wishes
A thousand times from me.

6

Then out burst the little sister :
'That small fat puppy of mine
Grew big, went mad, got so horrid,
We drowned him in the Rhine.'

7

The young one is like her sister,
In laughing especially ;
She has the self-same eyes too
That wrought me such misery.

VII

1

WE sat in the fisherman's cottage,
And gazed over the sea ;
The mists of evening gathered,
And mounted silently.

2

The lanterns in the lighthouse
Were kindled one by one,
And far away in the distance
A single ship sailed on.

3

We talked about storm and shipwreck,
And how the seaman fares,
Afloat between sky and water,
Wild joys and cruel cares.

4

We talked about far-off countries,
Of countries north and south,
And uncouth people who dwell there,
With customs most uncouth.

5

All 's fragrance and light by the Ganges,
And mighty trees bloom fair,
And grave and handsome people
Worship the lotus there.

6

In Lapland the folk are uncleanly,
Flat-headed, wide-mouthed, and small;
They crouch by the fire, and baking
Their fish, they croak and they squall.

7

The maidens gravely listened,
And all grew silent at last;
The ship was lost in the darkness,
The night had fallen so fast.

VIII

1

MY pretty fishermaiden,
Come row thy skiff to land,
Come hither and sit beside me,
We'll gossip hand in hand.

2

Make of my heart thy pillow,
And be not so shy with me;
Less coy art thou, daily trusting
Thyself to that wild sea!

3

My heart, just like the ocean,
Hath storm and ebb and flow,
And many a pearl of beauty,
Sleeping the waves below.

IX

1

THE moon is newly risen,
And sheds on the waves her spell;
I hold in my arms close prison
My Love, and our bosoms swell.

2

In warm sweet arms of my Dearest
I rest on the lonely strand;
'What is't in the wind thou hearest,
Why trembles thy warm white hand?

3

'No moan of the wind thou hearest,
Thou hearest the mermaids' song,
And my sisters' voices clearest,
The sea hath swallowed long.'

X

1

ON the clouds the great moon rests,
Like a tawny orange gleaming,
While her beams o'er the grey sea
In broad bands of gold are streaming.

2

Lone I wander o'er the strand,
Where the white-capt waves are breaking,
Many a gentle word I hear,
Voices in the water speaking.

3

Ah! the night is all too long,
Bursts my heart in dumb impatience—
Lovely watersprites come here,
Dance, and chant your incantations!

4

Take my head upon your lap,
Body and soul, with joy I lose them!
Sing me dead, caress me dead,
Kiss the life out of my bosom!

XI

1

IN their cloud-grey mantles muffled,
Now the mighty gods are sleeping,
And I hear how they are snoring,
While the storm on us comes leaping.

2

Wild the weather! Storm-gusts raving
This poor ship will surely shatter—
Who curbs now the fierce winds, hounding
These unruly billows at her?

3

None can hinder blasts from blowing,
Masts and planks groan as they riot,
And I wrap my mantle round me,
Like the gods to sleep in quiet.

XII

1

THE Wind comes raving, his storm-boots white
Tugs on the fiery old fellow!
He flogs the billows with all his might,
They howl and bluster and bellow.

2

From gloomy heavens with furious force
Wild gusts of rain come roaring;
As if old Night, as she pours and pours,
Would drown old Ocean, pouring.

3

The sea-gull clings to the cross-tree there,
And, hoarsely screaming and crying,
He flutters, and seems in shrill despair
Some evil prophesying.

XIII

1

THE storm pipes up for dancing
With whistle and sough and roar;
Hurrah, how the good ship capers,
Night lustily takes the floor.

2

Live ranges of water-mountains
Are shaped by the raging sea;
Here yawning in black abysses,
There towering white on our lee.

3

What cursing, puking, and praying
In reeks from the cabin come;
I hug the mast like a lover,
And wish myself safe at home!

XIV

1

STEALTHILY comes the gloaming,
A mist looms dark o'er the sea,
Mysteriously murmuring and foaming,
What fling the white waves to me?

2

A mermaid steps from the billows,
And sits by me on the shale,
Her breasts, like foam-white billows,
Outswell through her vesture's veil.

3

She squeezes me, she clips me,
Half hurts me in her fierce play :—
'Too tightly thy white arm grips me,
Thou beautiful water-fay!'

4

'Tightly my arms have tied thee,
And fiercely I clasp thee and fold;
I'll warm myself here beside thee,
The night is so cold—so cold.'

5

Pale, paler the moonbeams glimmer
Through clouds all dusky grey;
'Thine eyes grow wetter and dimmer,
Thou beautiful water-fay!'

6

'They grow not wetter and dimmer,
If wet be mine eyes and dim,
The drops on my lids that shimmer
Were flung by the billows grim.'

7

The sea-gulls mourn o'er the ocean,
That raves through the bursting spray;—
'Thy heart beats in wild commotion,
Thou beautiful water-fay!'

8

'My heart beats in wild commotion,
It beats in commotion wild,
For with ne'er-to-be-told devotion
I love thee, thou dear earth-child!'

XV

1

DEAR maiden, as each morning
Thy house I saunter by,
It glads me when at the window
Thy winsome face I spy.

2

My face with a silent question
Thy brown eyes gravely scan:
'Who art thou, and what ails thee,
Thou strange sick-looking man?'

3

I am a German Poet,
In German land well known;
When the best names are spoken,
They also speak my own.

4

And what ails me, dear maiden,
Makes many a German groan;
When the worst woes are spoken,
They also speak my own.

XVI

1

IN the last streak of evenshut
The sea far off was gleaming;
Alone in the lonely fisherman's hut
We sat there dumbly dreaming.

2

The mist arose, the ocean swelled,
The gulls came flitting and calling;
And from thy love-lit eyes outwelled
The tear-drops, gently falling.

3

I saw them fall upon thy hand,
And on my knees down-sinking,
I kissed the tears from thy white hand,
Thy sorrows with them drinking.

4

But from that hour my body sears,
My spirit dies for yearning;—
That ill-starred woman with her tears
Left poison in me burning.

XVII

1

UP there on yonder mountain
A castle stands fine to see,
Where dwell three charming maidens,
Who lavish their love on me.

2

On Saturday Hetty kissed me,
On Sunday 'twas Julia's day,
On Monday 'twas Kunigunde's,
Who quite took my breath away.

3

But Tuesday my castle maidens
Had bidden their friends to a fête;
The neighbouring lords and ladies
Came riding and driving in state.

4

But me they had not invited,
No stupider thing could they do!
For whispering aunts and cousins
Remarked it, and laughed at it too.

XVIII

1

UPON the far horizon
Appears like a cloud-ridge pale
The city with towers and steeples,
Dim through the gloaming's veil.

2

A damp sea-breeze is curling
The grey waste of the sea ;
With dreary oar-strokes the boatman
My boat rows drearily.

3

The sun once more in splendour
Lifts him the clouds above,
And shows me that place of places,
The place where I lost my Love.

XIX

1

I GREET thee well, great city
Of many a mystery,
That once within thy bosom
Held fast my Love for me.

2

Tell me, ye gates and ye steeples,
My Dearest—where is she?
I trusted you as my fortress,
To keep her safe for me.

3

The steeples I hold not guilty,
Their posts they could not quit,
When my Darling with trunks and bandboxe
So fast from the town would flit.

4

But you, ye gates, were the traitors,
Ye let her pass on the sly;
When silly girls are for bolting
Fools only on bolts rely.

XX

1

I STROLL again down the same old way,
The well-known turns I have taken;
Once more I come to the house of my Love,
That stands there void and forsaken.

2

But oh, the streets have grown too strait!
The pavement 's intolerable!
The houses are toppling o'er my head!
I'm off as fast as I'm able!

XXI

I STOOD where once she plighted
Her troth to me, softly weeping;
Where once her fall'n tears alighted
Cold snakes were hissing and creeping.

XXII

1

STILL is the night, the streets never waken,
Here dwelt my Sweetheart in days of yore;
Long since hath she the town forsaken,
Though the house yet stands where it stood before.

2

There stands too a man, aloft stark-staring,
And wrings his hands, a woebegone wretch;
I shudder, seeing his face despairing—
The moonlight shows me my own pale fetch.

3

Thou white-faced fellow, my phantom double,
Why apest thou my love's despair,
That many a night wrung my heart with troubl
In that same spot, in the years that were?

XXIII

1

HOW canst thou sleep so calmly,
Knowing I love thee still?
Came the old rage upon me
I'd burst the yoke from my will.

2

Knowest thou the good old ballad:
How a dead lover brave
Came to his Love at midnight
And haled her to his grave?

3

Trust me, thou fairest wonder,
Thou sweetest of maids for me,
I live, and am tenfold stronger
Than all the dead can be!

XXIV

1

A MAIDEN sleeps in her chamber,
Where tremblingly peers the moon;
Without comes fiddling and singing,
She wakes to a strange waltz-tune.

2

'I will but spy from the window
Who breaks my rest with that strain.'
There stands a skeleton grinning,
And fiddles and sings amain:

3

'To dance with me once you promised,
You've broken your promise light,
To-night 's our ball in the churchyard,
Come dance with me there to-night.'

4

Some witchery masters the maiden,
And lures her, and lures, till she glides
To follow the skeleton, singing
And fiddling as onward it strides.

5

It fiddles and skips and dances,
And clatters its bones to the tune,
The skull nid-nodding, nid-nodding
Eerily under the moon.

XXV

1

I STOOD there, darkly dreaming,
And gazed on her portrait fair,
Till the loved form before me
Took life mysteriously there.

2

About her lips there hovered
A wonderful sweet smile,
Her eyes through tears of sorrow
Tenderly gleamed the while.

3

And down my own cheeks flowing
My tears began to pour—
And oh, I cannot believe it,
I've lost thee for evermore.

XXVI

1

I MISERABLE Atlas! a whole world,
The whole great world of sorrows, I must bear i
I bear things most unbearable, and breaking
I feel the heart within me.

2

Ay, thou proud heart! Thou hast thy will indee
Thou wouldst be happy, infinitely happy,
Or infinitely wretched, my proud heart,
And now thou art most wretched.

XXVII

1

THE years are coming and going,
And men go down to the grave,
But never the love can perish
That in my heart I have.

2

Yet once more, but once, might I see thee,
And kneeling, thy lover true,
Before thee, murmur, dying:
'Madam, I love but you!'

XXVIII

1

I DREAMED: the moon looked sadly down,
And sadly the stars were shining;
A hundred miles was I borne to the town
Where my lost Love was pining.

2

And to her house I was wafted soft,
I kissed the bare stones before it—
Those threshold stones, her small feet so oft
Had prest, as her skirt swept o'er it.

3

Long was the night, and cold the night,
And cold the stones in my dreaming;
Her face from the window looked out so white,
Pale in the moonlight gleaming.

XXIX

1

WHY comest thou, lonely tear-drop,
Sad waif of the days gone by,
To trouble my sight, remaining
Unshed within mine eye?

2

The host of thy shining sisters
Have long ago vanished quite,
With all my joys and my sorrows,
Blown by on the winds of night.

3

Like mists have also vanished
Those twin blue eyes divine,
That once all those joys and sorrows
Smiled into this heart of mine.

4

Ah! even that love has vanished
Away like an empty sigh!
Thou old companionless tear-drop,
Thou too, the last, flow by!

XXX

1

THE wan half-moon of Autumn
Peers out from the gloomy skies;
There all alone by the churchyard
The quiet parsonage lies.

2

The Mother 's reading her Bible,
The Son 's at the candle a-gaze,
One Daughter drowsily stretches,
Her Younger Sister says:

3

'O God, how slowly and drearly
The days go by with us here!
With just a chance funeral to look at,
When comes a corpse on the bier.'

4

The Mother reads on as she answers:
'What folly! but four have died
Since yonder they buried your Father,
The churchyard-gate beside.'

5

'Heigho!' yawns the Elder Daughter,
'I'll starve here no longer with you.
I'm off to the Count to-morrow,
He 's rich, and adores me too.'

6

The Son bursts out a-laughing :
' Three hunters drink at the Star,
They're coining gold,—with their secret
Would make me rich as they are.'

7

The Mother flings her Bible
With rage in his famished face :
' Accurst of God ! with these footpads
The gallows wouldst thou grace ? '

8

They hear a tap at the window,
There comes a beckoning hand ;
Without, in his worn black cassock,
They see the dead Father stand.

XXXI

1

WELL, here 's the worst of bad weather,
With tempest of snow and rain ;
And snugly into the darkness
I peer through the window-pane.

2

There glimmers a lonely candle,
It wavers through wind and sleet ;
A mother with tiny lantern
Goes staggering along the street.

3

She 's gone to buy some butter
And eggs and flour, methinks,
To bake a cake for her daughter,
That good-for-nothing minx.

4

She lolls at home on the sofa,
And sleepily blinks at the blaze ;
Her golden curls are waving
About her beautiful face.

XXXII

1

THEY think I'm always pining
In love's most bitter woes,
And I have come to believe in
What everybody knows.

2

I've told thee, my little maiden
Whose great eyes daunt me so,
That past all words do I love thee,
That love gnaws my heart with woe.

3

'Twas but in my lonely chamber
I said such things to thee,
Alas! I was quite dumbfoundered
When those eyes looked at me.

4

For there stood evil angels,
Who fettered my tongue, I vow;
Alas! through those evil angels
I am so wretched now.

XXXIII

1

AH! those lilies white, thy fingers
Once again could I but kiss them!
Press them fondly to my heart,
And then die in silent weeping!

2

Thy clear violet eyes, they hover
Still before me, day and night,
And, O torment! how interpret
Their sweet, blue, unfathomed riddle?

XXXIV

1

HAS she never seemed to pity
Your most lover-like dejection?
In her eyes have you ne'er noted
Some return of your affection?

2

Could you, through those eyes unfathomed,
To her very soul pierce never?
Yet, my friend, you're no mere donkey
In such things, but counted clever.

XXXV

1

THEY loved one another; yet neither
Would this to the other confess;
They glowered on each other so fiercely,
Though dying of love ne'ertheless.

2

They parted at last, beholding
Each other only in dream,
And when, long since, they were buried,
Scarce knew it themselves, 'twould seem.

XXXVI

WHEN first I complained of my evil case,
You said not a word, but yawned in my face;
But when in verse with a lyric grace
I sang my woes, how warm was your praise!

XXXVII

I CALLED the Devil, and he came,
And I looked at him with wondering scan,
He is not ugly, he is not lame,
He 's a most genial, most charming man,
A man of the world, a man in his prime too,
Engaging, and courtly, a man of his time too.
He 's a diplomatist, first rate,
And speaks quite soundly of Church and State.

He 's rather pale ; but that is no wonder,
Sanskrit and Hegel he 's labouring under.
His favourite poet is still our Fouqué.
With critical work he is busied no longer,
But leaves as his proxy that scandal-monger,
His dear old grandmother, Hecate.
My legal studies he deigned to praise,
Having sapped at Law in his salad days,
And, hoping my friendship might not be
Too dear a bargain, he nodded to me,
And asked : if we had not met somewhere—
'The Spanish Ambassador's was 't ?' Ere he went hence,
I took a good look at his face, and declare
I found him quite an old acquaintance.

XXXVIII

1

MAN, be civil to the Devil,
Short is life, and soon 'tis o'er,
And damnation everlasting
Is no idle nurse's-lore.

2

Man, pay duly that thou owest,
Long is life, and slow runs o'er,
Many a time thou still must borrow,
As thou oft hast done before.

XXXIX

1

THE Holy Three Kings from the Morning Land
Still asked in sorrowful cadence :
Oh, which is the way to Bethlehem,
Ye beautiful youths and maidens?

2

The young nor the old, they knew not the way,
The Kings fared further, weary ;
They followed, followed a golden Star,
That shone for them kindly and cheery.

3

The Star stood still over Joseph's house,
They entered with wistful faces,
The ox it bellowed, the Babe he cried,
The Holy Three Kings sang praises.

XL

1

MY child, we two were children,
Two children small and gay ;
We crept into the hen-house,
And hid ourselves under the hay.

2

We crowed like cocks, and often,
As grown-up folk went by—
Cock-a-doo-doo ! They thought it
The cock's own real cry.

3

The cases in our courtyard
With wall-paper we made smart,
And lived in that cosiest of houses
Together, in joy of heart.

4

Our neighbour's ancient tabby
Came often to pay a call;
We met her with bows and curtsies,
And compliments none too small.

5

We asked after all her ailments
With friendliest sighs and grins;
We've played that game as gravely
With many an old cat since.

6

And often we sat there talking
Like old folk, seriously,
Complaining how all went better
In the good old times gone by;

7

How honesty, love, and religion,
Had vanished from this earth,
How dear was the price of coffee,
Of money how great the dearth.

8

Gone by are those games of childhood,
All things, in sooth, go by—
The times, and the world, and the money,
Religion, love, honesty.

XLI

1

THE heart in me is lead, and grieving
I long for those old days gone by,
While still the world was fit to live in,
And people jogged on quietly.

2

But now all seems at odd and even,
What struggling, pushing, drearihead!
Dead is the Lord up there in heaven,
And down below the Devil's dead.

3

All things look sullen and complaining,
So muddled up, so dank and cold,
But for the scrap of love remaining,
One 's heart were nowhere left a hold.

XLII

1

As the moon sails onward, striving
Through dun cloud-wreaths radiantly,
So swam forth a shining vision
Through these gloomy times for me.

2

There we sat beneath an awning,
Proudly sailing down the Rhine,
While the shores in summer verdure
Glowed in evening's warm sunshine.

3

At the feet of a fair lady,
Sweet as fair, I sat and mused,
Lovingly the golden sunbeams
All her pale dear face suffused.

4

Lutes were sounding, boys were singing,
All was one enchanted glee,
And the deeps of heaven grew bluer,
And my spirit wandered free.

5

Castle, mountain, wood and meadow,
Floated past us, legendwise;
And I saw them all reflected
In that lovely lady's eyes.

XLIII

1

IN dream I saw my Belov'd One,
A woman careworn and sad,
Her body withered and wasted,
That once such beauty had.

2

One child on her arm she carried,
And one by the hand led she,
Her gait, and her looks, and her clothing
Spoke sorrow and penury.

3

I met her as she tottered
Across the market-place,
She looked at me, and I murmured,
Heart-striken by her face:

4

'Come with me to my dwelling,
For pale and ill thou art,
Thy meat and drink to win thee
I'll work with tireless heart.

5

'I'll own as mine and cherish
The children that are thine,
And oh, thyself most fondly,
Poor hapless child of mine!

6

'I never once will remind thee
I loved thee with love so deep,
And when thou diest, live only
Upon thy grave to weep.'

XLIV

1

'WHY, my friend, keep on preluding
Still the old tune-on-one-string playing?
Will you sit for ever brooding
On the old eggs of Love's last laying?

2

'Fie! when, after endless watching,
From their shells the chicks come creeping,
Fluttering fledglings long a-hatching,
In a book you pen them cheeping.'

XLV

1

DON'T give way to such impatience,
Though the old notes of my sad singing
Have set sounding tones yet clearly
In the newest songs outringing.

2

Wait awhile, you shall hear dying
These last echoes of my sorrow,
As a new poetic Springtime
Wakes in my healed heart to-morrow.

XLVI

1

'TIS time to all follies I bade adieu,
Cold reason's mandate obeying;
As Comic Actor too long with you
The old Comedy I've been playing.

2

The splendid scenes were painted, you know,
In high-romantic fashion,
My knightly mantle with gold aglow,
I felt each most exquisite passion.

3

And now I'll tenderly take my leave
Of my silly ranting and braying;
Yet feel with anguish my breast still heave,
As though the old Comedy playing.

4

O God! In jest unconsciously
I felt every speech distracted;
I have, with death in the heart of me,
The dying hero enacted.

XLVII

1

THE wise King Visvamitra
Some gadfly drives him now,
With trouble and toil and penance
To earn Vasishta's cow.

2

Oh, wise King Visvamitra,
Oh, what an ox art thou,
To suffer such toil and penance,
And all for a paltry cow!

XLVIII

1

HEART, my heart, let naught dismay thee,
Learn to bear thy destiny.
What the Winter 's reft from thee
Budding Spring will soon repay thee.

2

Much, how much, is left moreover!
Oh, how fair looks the world still!
Heart, all things with joy can thrill:
Of all things be thou the lover!

XLIX

1

SWEET as a flower thou seemest,
So pure and fair thou art,
I gaze on thee, and sadness
Steals gently into my heart.

2

I long to lay on thy forehead
My hand, as I feel 'twere meet,
Praying that God will preserve thee
As pure and fair and sweet.

L

1

CHILD! lest I thy life should ruin,
With my heart I fought for ever,
Lest thy heart should learn to love me,
Strove that it should kindle never!

2

Yet that I so well succeeded
To regret might almost move me;
And I still go thinking, thinking:
'Oh, that she even yet might love me!'

LI

1

WHEN on my couch I am lying,
Pillowed in darkness deep,
A comforting vision comes hovering
Over me ere I sleep.

2

When slumber kisses my eyelids,
And still half-awake I seem,
I feel that vision stealing
Gently into my dream.

3

And when that dream in the morning
Has fled, it still is there;
And in my heart I hold it
All day and everywhere.

LII

1

MAIDEN with the lips like rosebuds,
And with eyes both sweet and clear,
O my darling little maiden,
In my heart I hold thee here!

2

Long I find the winter evening,
And I might be with thee there,
By thee sitting, with thee chatting
In thy room where comes no care.

3

To my lips I might be pressing
Rapturously thy small white hand,
With my tears that hand bedewing
Tenderly, that small white hand.

LIII

SNOW out there may rise in towers,
Storms may hurl their hail in showers,
Hailstones on my window clatter:
Shall I moan for such small matter,
While in my heart I hold in fee
My Love's dear face and Springtime's glee?

LIV

1

TO Our Lady kneel in duty
Some, and some to Paul and Peter;
I will pray to something sweeter,
Thee alone, thou Sun of Beauty!

2

Give me kisses, give me blisses,
Grace me with thy gentle radiance,
Loveliest Sun among all maidens,
Loveliest Maid the sun e'er kisses.

LV

1

MY pallid face betrays it not
To thee how for love I languish;
And wouldst thou wring from these proud lips
The prayer of my deep anguish?

2

Oh, far too proud are these my lips
That kiss now and jest to-morrow;
They'd speak perhaps but a scornful word
While I was dying of sorrow.

LVI

1

FRIEND, thou art with love distraught,
And new torments plague thee dearly ;
Gloom is gathering in thy head,
While thy heart sees but more clearly.

2

Friend, thou art with love distraught,
Shrinking still the truth from learning,
And I see thy heart's wild glow
Plainly through thy waistcoat burning.

LVII

1

I LONGED at your side to tarry,
And there find rest with you ;
Away from me you must hurry,
You had so much to do.

2

I told you that my spirit
Was yours, yours utterly ;
And loudly you laughed to hear it,
And bobbed a curtsy at me.

3

You made my love's vexations
Rise higher in flood by this ;
And even, to tax my patience,
Denied me a parting kiss.

4

Don't think I'll blow out my brains, dear,
Bad though my case may be,
All this, with its joys and pains, dear,
Has happened before to me.

LVIII

1

BRIGHT sapphires are those eyes of thine,
The loveliest, the sweetest.
Oh, three times happy is the man
Whom with their love thou greetest.

2

Thy heart it is a diamond,
With noblest lustre gleaming.
Oh, three times happy is the man
For whom with love 'tis beaming.

3

And rubies are those lips of thine,
Rarer the world saw never.
Oh, three times happy is the man
Blest with their love for ever.

4

Would I but knew that happy man,
Could catch that favoured lover
But once in the green woods alone!—
His bliss would soon be over.

LIX

1

WITH half-lying lover's pleading
I have sought to win your heart,
And, in my own toils entangled,
In sheer earnest played my part.

2

Now, when you have served me rightly,
With a jest have gone your way,
Hellish powers draw near, in earnest
I'll go shoot myself some day.

LX

LIFE and the world are too fragmentary—
The bits to our German Professor I'll carry.
He puts together life's map so neatly,
In a system quite clear he makes all things combine;
With rags from his nightcap and dressing-gown featly
He stops the gaps in the world's design.

LXI

1

TOO long have I my head been splitting
With pondering and thinking, day and night;
But now your eyes, well worth my loving,
Have put my foolish doubts to flight.

2

I'll stay here now, where your eyes are shining
In all their splendour, wise and sweet—
That I once more should play the lover,
I never dreamt of such a feat.

LXII

1

THEY'RE having a party this evening,
And the house is full of light;
Above, o'er the shining window,
A shadow moves darkly in sight.

2

Thou seest me not in the darkness
Stand here, from thy mirth apart;
Nor canst thou see through the darkness
The deeps of my gloomy heart.

3

My gloomy heart it loves thee,
It loves thee and doth break,
It breaks and throbs, but thou seest not—
Bleeding for thy sweet sake.

LXIII

1

I WOULD I might pour my sorrows
All forth in one single word,
Away the glad breezes would bear it,
The saddest that heart e'er heard.

2

They'd waft it to thee, Belov'd One,
That word o'erbrimmed with woe;
At every hour thou shouldst hear it,
Wherever thou shouldst go.

3

And when, just closing in slumber,
Thy lids lay half-apart,
That word of mine would come seeking
In deepest dream thy heart.

LXIV

1

THOU hast all a mortal could covet,
Of pearls and diamonds great store,
And hast the loveliest eyes, too—
My Darling, what wouldst thou more?

2

Upon those eyes so lovely
  Have I full many a score
Of deathless poems indited—
  My Darling, what wouldst thou more?

3

With those dear eyes so lovely
  My heart thou hast plagued full sore,
And left all my life in ruins—
  My Darling, what wouldst thou more?

LXV

1

HE who for the first time loves,
  Even though vainly, is a god;
But the man who loves twice over,
And in vain—that man 's a fool.

2

I am such a fool, for, loving,
I again love unrequited!
Sun, and moon, and stars laugh at me,
And I laugh with them—and die.

LXVI

1

SQUANDERING advice and good counsel on me,
Honours o'erwhelming they heaped upon me,
Said that I only had to wait,
Proffered their patronage early and late.

2

Yet, for all their patronization,
Hop the twig I were fain, for starvation,
Had I not met with a worthy man,
Bravely he backed me, as good men can.

3

Meat and drink this fine fellow brought me!
Ne'er I'll forget the service he wrought me!
Pity that kiss him I never can!
For I myself am that worthy man.

LXVII

1

WHO could hold in too much honour
This most amiable young fellow?
He to oysters often treats me,
With *liqueurs* and Rhine-wine mellow.

2

Smart his coat, and smart his trousers,
Smarter still the scarf adorning
His fair neck, he comes to ask me
How I'm feeling every morning.

3

Of my wide renown he tells me,
Of my wit, my charm of manner;
While to serve me and befriend me
He 's the most untiring planner.

4

He creates at evening parties
'Mong the ladies a sensation,
Ranting my divinest poems
With his air of inspiration.

5

Oh, to find such nice young fellows
Extant still, should rapture kindle
In these times of ours when daily
More and more his betters dwindle.

LXVIII

1

I DREAMED I was the Lord Himself,
Throned up in heaven so proudly,
And angels thronged around me there,
Who praised my verses loudly.

2

And cakes I ate, and comfits too,
Dollarsworth, day by day there,
With cardinal I washed them down,
And not a groat to pay there.

3

But sheer *ennui* it plagued me sore,
I longed on earth to revel,
And, were I not the Lord Himself,
Had gone straight to the Devil.

4

'Thou long-legged Angel Gabriel,
Put on thy boots directly,
Bring me my gossip dear, Eugene;
But seek him circumspectly.

5

'Don't look for him in lecture-rooms,
But where Tokay inspires;
Don't look for him in Hedwig's Church,
But snug at Mamselle Meyer's.'

6

Straight he unfurls his pair of wings,
And down from heaven he flings him,
Picks up my chum, the dear old sot,
And back to heaven he brings him.

7

'Ay lad, I am the Lord Himself,
The whole world owns my sway, man!
I always told thee I should turn
Respectable some day, man.

8

'And every day a miracle
I'll work for thy delighting,
And for thy sport my grace to-day
Shall set Berlin a-fighting.

9

'The paving-stones of every street
Shall split, the town all over,
And lo! an oyster fresh and clear
Shall every stone discover.

10

'A rain of fresh-squeezed lemon-juice
Shall daintily bedew them;
The very kennels, prime old Hock
Shall run like water through them.'

11

How all Berlin comes out to browse,
Their hearts in joyous flutter;
The gentry of the County Courts
Lap wine from every gutter.

12

How gleefully the poets rush,
This feast for gods to eat up!
The ensigns and lieutenants crowd
To lick the very street up.

13

The ensigns and lieutenants bold
Are shrewdest in the mellay,
They know one can't work every day
Miracles for the belly.

LXIX

1

ONE perfect day in July I left you,
I meet you once more in January;
You then sat there in full heat of Summer,
Now cooler you've grown—nay cold, I see.

2

Soon comes new parting, and my next visit
May find you neither warm nor cold,
And over your grave I may be stepping
When my own sad heart is poor and old.

LXX

1

FROM sweetest lips thrust forth, and rudely driven
From loveliest arms, in close embrace that held me!
I longed to have stayed but one day more in heaven,
Coachman and horses then to fly compelled me.

2

Well, that is life, my Love! One endless wailing,
Endless leave-taking, hearts that still must sever!
Could not thy heart clasp mine with love unfailing?
Could even thine eyes not hold me there for ever?

LXXI

1

ALONE in the dark post-wagon
We travelled the livelong night;
We nestled close to each other,
With laughing and jesting light.

2

But how we stared next morning,
My lassie, when broke the day!
For twixt us two sat Cupid,
A smiling stowaway.

LXXII

1

GOD best knows in what strange quarter
This mad minx has settled down;
Cursing, in this rainy weather,
I've run over all the town.

2

From one tavern to another,
Cross I turn and turn again,
Pestering every boorish waiter
For some news of her in vain.

3

There I spy her at the window,
Tittering clear she beckons—well,
Who'd have thought to find the damsel
Staying in this Grand Hotel?

LXXIII

1

LIKE dismal dreams the houses
Are standing in long, bleak row;
Close muffled in my mantle
Silently by them I go.

2

The tower of the cathedral
Tolls midnight solemnly;
With all her charms and her kisses
My Love is waiting for me.

3

The moon 's my lantern-bearer,
And lights me with friendly care ;
I come to the house of my Darling,
And call to my page up there :

4

'I thank thee, old friend so trusty,
For making my path so bright ;
From duty I now relieve thee,
The rest of the world go light !

5

'And when thou findest a lover
Bemoaning his lonely case,
Him comfort, as me of old time
Thou hast with thy friendly rays.'

LXXIV

1

OH, when you are my wedded wife,
How they will envy you, dear !
For you shall lead the easiest life,
All pleasure, naught else to do, dear.

2

If raving and scolding you spend your days,
I'll bear it meekly, of course, dear ;
But, if my verses you do not praise,
I'll sue for a divorce, dear.

LXXV

1

UPON thy snow-white shoulder
I lay my head, o'erhear
Thy heart's most secret longing
Whispered into my ear.

2

The Blue Hussars are come bugling,
And ride through the city gate,
And my Heart's Delight will forsake me,
To-morrow, at any rate.

3

Yet, wilt thou to-morrow forsake me,
To-day at least thou art mine,
And in thy beautiful arms, dear,
Shall my bliss be twice divine.

LXXVI

1

THE Blue Hussars have come bugling,
And ride through the gate away;
I come to thee, Dearest, and bring thee
A garland of roses gay.

2

Well, that was a wild house-warming,
With warriors and wastrels fine!
Even in thy heart they quartered,
That little heart of thine.

LXXVII

1

I TOO in my youth, poor duffer,
Many a bitter pang did suffer
In Love's glowing flame.
Now too dear has grown the fuel,
Out has gone that fire so cruel.
Ma foi! I've played the game!

2

Take my counsel, pretty ladies,
Send your foolish tears to Hades,
With foolish pangs of love's unrest!
Come, forget, since life is left you,
Loves whereof the years have reft you,
Ma foi! upon my breast.

LXXVIII

1

HAVE you really come to hate me,
Have you really changed so sadly?
Round the world I'll go complaining
That you treated me so badly.

2

O ye lips, grown so ungrateful,
How can ye speak evil of me,
Me who lovingly have kissed you
In fair days when ye did love me?

LXXIX

1

AH, once more those eyes that ever
Met my own with gentle greeting,
And once more those lips that ever
Blessed my life, my lips in meeting!

2

And once more the voice that ever
Filled my heart with bliss to hear it!
I alone am changed for ever,
Changed in secret, changed in spirit.

3

In those arms, so white, so lovely,
Closely folded, love-protected,
Heart to heart, I thrill not, feel not,
Unresponsive, dull, dejected.

LXXX

SELDOM ye my thoughts can follow,
Seldom I can follow yours ;
Only when in filth we wallow,
Thought clasps thought like paramours.

LXXXI

1

THE eunuchs all abused me,
As I came lilting by,
Abused me and accused me
Of shocking all decency.

2

And up their dear little voices
They lifted, one and all,
Their pipings were clear as crystal,
But oh, how thin and small !

3

They sang of love's woes, confound them !
Of love, and love's ' gushing heart ' ;
The ladies' tears half-drowned them,
At such a feast of art.

LXXXII

1

SOFT and cool o'er Salamanca
Summer's evening breeze was blowing,
While with my fair Spanish Donna
Round the ramparts I was going.

2

Round her waist my arm was folded,
Waist more slender than a willow,
And my hand felt her proud bosom
Heave beneath it like a billow.

3

Yet, faint-breathing through the lindens,
Came to me a whisper dreary,
And the dark mill-stream below us
Told bad dreams in murmurs eerie.

4

'Ah, Señora! boding tells me
They'll expel me now for ever,
And round Salamanca's rampart
We again shall ramble never.'

LXXXIII

1

CLOSE to me dwells Don Enriquez,
'Handsome man' by reputation;
Next-door neighbours are our chambers,
Thin the wall of separation.

2

Through the streets when proudly strides he,
Dogs behind him and before him,
Spurs a-clinking, whiskers curling,
Salamanca's Dames adore him.

3

But when evening breathes her stillness
In his room alone he lingers,
Pleasant dreams his soul inspiring,
As his dear guitar he fingers.

4

Then the trembling strings he clutches,
And begins his cursed strumming—
Sick as any cat he makes me
With his quavering and brum-brumming.

LXXXIV

1

WE scarcely had met ere thy voice and thy glances
Told me thy heart had made friends with me;
But that thy wicked old mother stood watching,
We two had been kissing presently.

2

Again from the town I must hasten to-morrow,
And round the same old rut must fare;
There peeps from the window my fair-haired maiden,
And friendly greeting I wave to her there.

LXXXV

1

OVER the mountain climbs now the sunligh
Far lamb-bells tinkle o'er the plain ;
My Darling, my Lamb, my Sunlight, my One Li
Ah ! might I see thee but once again !

2

I gaze, gaze up, like a spy come peeping,—
Farewell, my Love, I must fly from thee !
In vain ! The curtains close guard are keeping,
She lies and sleeps on—does she dream of me

LXXXVI

1

IN Halle's market-place
There stand two monstrous lions.
Halle, thy lions' hectoring scorn,
How basely have they tamed it !

2

In Halle's market-place
There stands a monstrous giant.
He has a sword, yet wields it not ;
He 's turned to stone by terror !

3

In Halle's market-place
There stands a church as monstrous.
The Blue Corps and the Scarlet Corps
Have plenty of room to pray in.

LXXXVII

1

SUMMER twilight now reposes
Over woodland and green meadow,
Golden moon from azure heaven
Sheds cool rays through misty shadow.

2

By the brooklet chirps the cricket,
Something stirs the water's chillness,
And the wanderer hears a splashing
And soft breathing through the stillness.

3

There alone bathes in the streamlet
Some fair elf, or I am dreaming;
Arm and neck, so white and lovely,
Coldly in the moonlight gleaming.

LXXXVIII

1

NIGHT o'er my strange road lies brooding,
Sick my heart, my limbs outworn;—
Gentle Moon, with silent blessing
Thou dost light my path forlorn.

2

Gentle Moon, thy radiant splendour
Scares away night's horrors grim;
Routed now fly all my sorrows,
And mine eyes with tears are dim.

LXXXIX

1

DEATH is for me the cool of night,
And life to me the sultry day,
Now darkness falls, I slumber,
Day leaves me a weary wight.

2

Over my bed stands a great hornbeam,
Where sings the youngest nightingale;
Of love, love only, singing,
I hear her even in dream.

XC

1

'WHERE is now your charming Sweetheart,
Sung so charmingly by you,
When the magic flames of passion
Pierced your heart so strangely through?'

2

With those flames, ah! long extinguished,
Warmth and light my heart forsook.
Lo! the urn that holds the ashes
Of my love, this little book!

Twilight of the Gods

NOW May is here with all her golden lights,
Her silk-soft winds, and her spice-breathing airs;
Gently she lures with all her snowy blossoms,
And greeting from a thousand violets' eyes.
She spreads her carpet green o'erprankt with flowers,
And woven of sunshine and of morning dew,
And summons every kindly child of man.
The pale townsfolk obey her earliest call;
The men have donned their trousers of Nankin,
And Sunday coats a-shine with golden buttons;
The women deck themselves in innocent white;
Young gallants proudly twirl their Spring moustaches;
The girls allow their maiden breasts to heave;
Town poets cram into their pockets paper,
Pencil and pince-nez; and with joyful shouts
The eddying crowd flock to the city gates,
And camp outside them on the well-trimm'd grass.
Wondering to find the industrious trees so green,
They hear the singing of the gleeful birds,
And shout their joy to the blue tent of heaven.
Even to me May came. She knocked three times
Upon my door, and cried: ''Tis I, the May!
Thou pale-faced Dreamer, come—I want to kiss thee!'

I kept my door fast locked, and shouted back :
' In vain thou lurest me, ill visitor !
I have looked thee through and through, looked through
and through
The world's whole plan, and I have seen too much,
And looked too deep, and gone is all my joy ' ;
Eternal pangs are gnawing in my heart.
I gaze right through the hard and stony crust
Of all men's houses and of all men's hearts,
And see in both but misery, lies, and fraud.
I in men's faces read the thoughts of men,
Still evil. In the maiden's modest blush
I see secret desire longingly tremble ;
On youth's proud head, crazed with romantic dreams,
I see the motley zany's cap and bells ;
Caricatures alone and feeble shadows
I see upon this earth, and only doubt
Whether it be madhouse or hospital.

I see through the foundations of old Earth,
As they were crystal—see through all the horror
That May, with her fresh festal wreath of green,
Strives to bedeck in vain. I see the dead :
They lie below there in their narrow coffins,
Their weak hands folded, and their eyes a-stare,
White in array, and ghastly white in face ;
And through their lips the yellow grave-worms crawl.
I see the son, his mourning-robe still new,
Sit with his mistress on his father's grave ;—
The nightingales round them sing mocking songs,
The tender field-flowers laugh maliciously,

And the dead father turns him in his grave,
While Mother Earth shudders for very pain.

Ah! thou poor Earth, I know thine agonies!
I see the fire in thy chill breast grow dull,
And see the blood pour from thy thousand veins,
And see how thy old wound yawns ever wider,
And from it wildly spout flame, smoke, and blood.
I see thy insolent Sons of Giant Race,
Thy brood primaeval, climb from gloomy rifts,
In their strong fists red torches brandishing;
Firmly they fix their iron scaling-ladders,
And fiercely storm heaven's fortress in the sky.
The black Dwarfs clamber after; crackling loud,
The golden stars up there come ruining down.
With impious hands they rend the golden curtain
Of God's own tent, and howling they hurl down,
Before his face, the Angels' pious hosts.
Upon his throne God sits, pale as a corpse,
Plucks from his head the crown, and rends his hair—
And nearer, nearer, throng the savage rout.
The Giants hurl their torches, glowing red,
Into heaven's kingdom, and the Dwarfs ply hard
Their fiery scourges on the Angels' backs.
They writhe, and cringe before them in fierce pain,
Then by the hair forth from their thrones are flung.

I see, I see my own poor Angel there,
With his fair clustering locks, and aspect sweet,
And with eternal love upon his mouth,
Eternal blessedness in his blue eyes—

Lo! a black, hideous, hateful Kobold comes,
Harries him from his place, my blighted Angel,
Leers on his noble form with loathsome grin,
And clasps him tight in amorous embrace!
Then peals through all the worlds a yelling cry,
The pillars crack, together Heaven and Earth
Rush down, and now, sole Queen, reigns ancient Night.

Ratcliff

THE Dream-god brought me to a Land of Dream,
Where weeping willows gently bade me welcome,
With long green swaying arms, and where the flowers
With sonsie sisters' eyes gazed calmly on me;
Where each bird's note sounded familiarly,
Where even the dog's bark seemed a well-known sound,
Where every voice, each object, greeted me
As an old friend; and yet all things I saw
Appeared so strange, so wonderfully strange!

Before a stately house, whose fashion seemed
That of the country of my dream, I stood.
My heart throbbed in my breast; but in my brain
All was at rest, and quietly I shook
The dust of travel from my travelling dress.
Shrill rang the bell, and open sprang the door.

And there were men and women, many a face
Well known. And silent care sat upon all,
And trouble half-concealed. Strangely perturbed,
With eyes that spoke deep grief, they looked at me,
So that it sent a horror through my soul,
Bodeful of some unknown impending woe.
At once I recognized old Margaret;
Questioned her with a look; and yet she spoke not.
'Where, where,' I asked, 'is Mary?' yet she spoke not;
But gently took my hand, and led me on
Through many a long and brightly lighted hall,
Where pomp and splendour reigned, and deathlike silence.

At last she led me to a dusky chamber,
And pointed, with her face half-turned away,
To a wan shape that on the sofa sat.

'Are *you* Mary?' I asked. And in my heart
I felt amazement at the hardihood
Wherewith I spoke. A stony voice untoned,
Replying, rasped my ear: 'So people call me.'
Thereat a stabbing pain froze all my blood,
These hollow, chilling tones were then the voice
So sweet in music once, the voice of Mary!
That woman in those lilacs pale of woe,
So negligently clad, with sagging bosom,
Eyes in a glassy stare, the withered cheeks
Of that white face with muscles hanging slack—
Alas! this woman, then, was once the fair,
The sweet and blooming, love-inspiring Mary!

'You've been long on your travels!' she cried aloud,
With an uncanny, cold familiarity,
'You have lost that air of languishing, dear friend;
Your health is good, and lusty thigh and calf
Proclaim you in good case.' A lukewarm smile
Trembled about her wan and bloodless lips.
Bluntly, in sheer confusion, I exclaimed:
'They told me you were married?' 'Ay, God wot!'
Laughing, she said in tones as loud as mine,
'I've got a block of wood, cobbled in leather,
That calls itself my spouse. But wood is wood.'
And in disgust she laughed in tuneless tones
That sent cold shuddering through my very soul.
Doubt gripped me then: 'Can these be the pure lips,
The lips of Mary, coy as any flower?'
But up she rose, and snatching from the couch
Her shawl, flung it about her neck, and seized
My arm, and led me through the open house-door,
And led me on through meadow, grove, and field.

The sun's broad disk, all red and glowing now,
Stooped lower, and his glory was outpoured
O'er trees, o'er flowers, and o'er the glassy stream
That in the distance flowed majestically.
'See you there that great golden eye that swims
On the blue water?' suddenly Mary cried.
'Be calm,' I said, 'poor creature!' And I saw,
Dim through the gloam, a ghostly tapestry
Woven like the scenes of some old fairy tale.
Out of the plains wan cloudy shapes arose,
Embracing there with white and vaporous arms!

The violets tenderly gazed on each other,
The lilies bent together longingly,
And every rose glowed in a trance of joy.
The pinks breathed their sweet balm like subtle flame;
In blissful odours revelled every flower,
And all wept silently tears of delight,
And all in ecstasy cried: 'Love! Love! Love!'
The butterflies were fluttering there, the bright
Rose-chafer hummed ever his elfin song,
The winds of evening whispered, and the oaks
Murmured, and sweetly sang the nightingale.
And ever through this whispering, murmuring, singing,
That faded woman, hanging on my arm,
Prattled with tinny, cold, discordant voice:
'I know their nightly doings at the castle;
The long-legged ghost is a good-natured fool,
He nods and grants to all what each desires;
The Bluecoat is an angel; but the Red,
With naked sword, is your most deadly foe.'
With yet more motley and strange talk she plied me,
Babbled forth all at once, and sat her down,
Tired out, beside me on a mossy bank
That lay beneath an aged oak's great stem.

And there we sat together, sad and silent,
And at each other gazed, and ever sadder
We grew. The oak sighed like a dying man.
In deepest sorrow sang the nightingale.
Yet the red rays came crowding through the leaves,
Shimmering all over Mary's pallid face,
And lured a glow from her blank, staring eyes;

And with her old sweet voice again she spoke :
' How didst thou know how wretched I am now?
I read it lately in those wild songs of thine.'

An icy pang pierced through my breast, a horror
Of my own frenzy, which into the future
Looked in a flash. In darkness reeled my brain,
And in affright I wakened from my dream.

Donna Clara

1

IN the garden dim with twilight
Wanders the Alcalde's Daughter ;
Merrily sound the drums and trumpets
From the castle, as she wanders.

2

' I grow weary of the dances,
And the flatteries phrased so sweetly
By the knights, who still compare me
To the sun, whene'er they meet me.

3

' Deadly dull to me are all things,
Since I saw, through glimmering moonbeams,
That young Knight, who to my window,
Eve by eve, with lute allures me.

4

'As he stood, so bold, so slender,
In his eyes the lightning gleaming
Flashed from his pale noble visage,
Like St. George as I have dreamed him.'

5

So that night mused Donna Clara,
On the ground her eyes were poring;
Up she glanced, and saw him standing—
That unknown fair Knight, before her.

6

Hand clasps hand, with loving whispers
Roam they through the moon's pale glories,
Flattered by the friendly zephyr,
Greeted by the enchanted roses.

7

As in tales, the enchanted roses
Greet them like Love's glowing heralds.
'Say, Belovèd, why those blushes
Thy fair cheek so suddenly redden?'

8

'Gnats are stinging me, Belov'd One,
Summer gnats I hate as truly,
And as deeply, as the rabble
Of the long-nosed tribes of Jewry.'

9

'Waste no breath on gnats or Jews, Love,'
Says the Knight in accents gentle;
While a thousand milk-white blossoms
From the almond-trees fall trembling.

10

Thousand milk-white almond-blossoms
Round them shed their mystic odour;
'Do but tell me, my Belov'd One,
Is thy heart all mine, mine only?'

11

'Yes, I love thee—by the Saviour
Hear me swear it, my Belovèd!
Whom the Jews, of God accursèd,
Wickedly contemned and murdered.'

12

'Waste no breath on Jews or Saviour,'
Says the Knight in accents gentle:
While around them, bathed in moonlight,
Dreamily the lilies tremble.

13

Tall white lilies, bathed in moonlight,
Upward gaze, the stars' adorers.
'Do but tell me, my Belov'd One,
Was that oath not falsely sworn me?'

14

'Naught in me is false, Belovèd,
In my heart no drop is Moorish,
Not one drop was ever tainted
By the filthy tribes of Jewry.'

15

'Waste no breath on Jews or Moslems!'
Says the Knight in accents gentle;
And he leads the Alcalde's Daughter
To a dusky bower of myrtle.

16

Secretly his tender love-net
Flings he round her ere she knows it!
Short their speeches, long their kisses,
Wild their hearts with love o'erflowing.

17

There the nightingales' sweet singing
Lulls them like a bridal chorus;
As in some bright torch-dance moving,
Gleam from out the grass the glow-worms

18

On the bower falls hushing silence,
Nought is heard save the coy myrtles
Whispering softly lovers' secrets,
And the flowers breathing gently.

19

But a sudden blare of trumpets,
Roll of drums peals from the castle,
And, awaking, Donna Clara
From her lover's arms hath started.

20

'Hark! they call me now, Belovèd!
But, before we part, I bid thee
Tell me what dear name thou bearest,
Yet so long from me hast hidden.'

21

Then the Knight, serenely smiling,
Kissed the fingers of his lady,
Kissed her lips, and kissed her forehead,
Then the cryptic word proclaimed he:

22

'I, Señora, I your lover,
Am the son of the much-honoured,
Great, and very-learnèd Rabbi
Israel of Saragossa.'

Almansor

I

1

IN Cordova's great cathedral
Stand great columns thirteen hundred,
Thirteen hundred giant columns
Bear the mighty dome's vast wonder.

2

Over domes and walls and columns
Texts from the Koràn are gleaming,
Everywhere the Arab letters
Interwoven like floral wreathing.

3

Moorish Kings long since built nobly
This great house in praise of Allah,
But in time's mysterious maelstrom
Many things have changed their fashion.

4

From the towers where once the *muezzin*
Called to prayer all True Believers,
Now a melancholy booming
Sounds when Christian bells are pealing.

5

On the steps where True Believers
Once the Prophet's words have chanted,
Now the shaven priests exhibit
That stale mystery of their masses.

6

Fine the posturing and bowing,
Fine the bleating, smoking, tinkling
Here before their painted puppets,
While the foolish tapers twinkle.

7

In Cordova's great cathedral
Stands Almansor ben Abdullah,
Looks in silence on the columns,
Then, deep in his throat, he murmurs:

8

'O ye columns, strong as giants,
Once adorned in Allah's honour,
Now must ye pay servile homage
To the Christian rites abhorrèd!

9

'Through long years ye have grown accustomed
Your vast load to bear with patience;
Weaker things for burdens lighter
Must find easier consolation.'

10

Then his head, with face untroubled,
Bends Almansor ben Abdullah
O'er the sculptured font baptismal
In Cordova's great cathedral.

II

1

SWIFT he strides from the cathedral,
Forth on his wild steed he rushes,
In the wind his wet locks waving,
And his hat's gay plumes a-flutter.

2

On the road to Alcolea,
All along the Guadalquivir,
Where the almonds white are blooming,
And the golden orange glimmers;

3

Swift the mirthful knight rides onward,
Whistles, sings with careless laughter,
While the birds keep concert with him,
And the stream's far-sounding waters.

4

In the Castle of Alcolea
Dwells fair Clara de Alvarez;
In Navarre her father's fighting,
None to curb her in his absence.

5

And Almansor in the distance
Hears drums beaten, trumpets blowing,
And he sees the lighted castle
Shine through shadowing trees before him

6

In the Castle of Alcolea
Dance in rich array twelve damsels,
Dance in rich array twelve knights there;
Best of all Almansor dances.

7

Like one winged with gay good-humour,
Round the festal hall he flutters,
In the ear of every lady
Sweetest flatteries he murmurs.

8

The fair hand of Isabella
Swift he kisses, and forsakes her;
Then he sits before Elvira,
In her face with rapture gazes.

9

Laughing then asks Leonora
If he now may hope to please her,
And the golden cross he shows her,
On his broidered mantle gleaming.

10

He assures each lovely lady
That his heart holds but her image;
Thirty times at least that evening
Lightly swears: 'As I'm a Christian!'

III

1

IN the Castle of Alcolea
Joy and music sound no longer,
Knights and ladies all are vanished,
Candles burnt out in their sockets.

2

Donna Clara and Almansor
Only in the hall have tarried,
And its lonely light upon them
Sheds the last faint-glimmering candle.

3

On a sofa sits the lady,
And the knight upon her footstool,
While his head opprest with slumber
On her lap rests while she soothes him.

4

Oil of rose from golden phial
Pours the lady, sadly musing,
On the brown locks of Almansor,—
And he sighs deep from his bosom.

5

One sweet kiss with soft mouth gently
Prints the lady, sadly musing,
On the brown locks of Almansor—
And his brow grows stern and gloomy.

6

Tears from her sweet eyes, soft-shining,
Weeps the lady, sadly musing,
On the brown locks of Almansor—
And his lips in sleep are moving.

7

And he dreams: again he stands there,
With his head bent low and dripping,
In Cordova's great cathedral,
Gloomy voices round him whisper.

8

All the lofty giant columns
Hears he in one wrathful murmur:
'We will bear these things no longer!'
And they stagger and they shudder.

9

Furiously they crash together,
Pale at once grow priests and people,
Down the mighty dome comes crashing,
And the Christian Gods fly weeping.

The Pilgrimage to Kevlaar

I

1

THE Mother stood at the window,
The Son lay on his bed.
'To see the great procession
Wilt thou not rise?' she said.

2

'I am so sick, dear mother,
I cannot hear nor see
For thinking of my dead Gretchen,
That wrings the heart in me.'

3

'Get up, we'll yonder to Kevlaar,
With prayer-book and rosary;
There will God's blessed Mother
Heal thy sick heart for thee.'

4

The heavy church banners flutter,
As chanting the crowd tramps on;
Through Köln on the great Rhine river
The long procession's gone.

5

The Mother follows the many,
Her Son, she leads him now,
They sing, those two, in the chorus:
'Dear Mary, praised be thou!'

II

1

THE Mother of God in Kevlaar
Dons her best gown to-day;
She 's up to her eyes in business,
Much sick folk is come that way.

2

The sick that come to Kevlaar
Bring her, as offerings meet,
Of limbs in wax-work moulded
Full many, both hands and feet.

3

And he who a wax hand offers
His hand is healed of its wound,
And he who a wax foot offers
Straight is his foot made sound.

4

There 's many come halting to Kevlaar
Dance tight-ropes at every fair,
And many a right good Fiddle
Brought never sound finger there.

5

The Mother has ta'en a waxlight,
And fashioned thereof a heart.
'Give that to God's blessed Mother,
She'll heal thee of thy smart.'

6

The Son took the wax heart sighing,
Went sighing up to the shrine;
The words from his heart welled slowly,
The tear-drops welled from his eyne:

7

'O blest above all creatures,
O Virgin divine and pure,
O Queen of Heaven, my sorrows
Cry now to thee for cure!

8

'I dwelt alone with my mother,
In Köln, in the city there,
That city with many hundred
Of chapels and churches fair.

9

'And near us two dwelt Gretchen,
That now lies under ground—
This wax heart, Mary, I bring thee,
Heal thou my heart's deep wound!

10

'Heal thou my heart's long sickness,
And early and late, I vow,
I'll worship thee, fervently singing:
"Dear Mary, praised be thou!"'

III

1

THE heart-sick Son and his Mother
Slept both in their little room:
There lightly God's blessed Mother
Came pacing through the gloom;

2

And, bending over the sick man,
Lightly her heart did lay
Upon his heart, and gently
She smiled, and vanished away.

3

The Mother sees all in her dreaming,
And more, with eyes endowed;
She wakened out of her slumber,
The dogs were barking so loud.

4

There lay, outstretched on his pallet,
Her Son, and he was dead;
Upon his cheek's death-paleness
The dawnlight glimmered red.

5

She folded her hands, the Mother,
She felt, she knew not how;
Devoutly sang she softly:
'Dear Mary, praised be thou!'

POEMS FROM THE HARZ-JOURNEY

1824

Prologue

1

BLACK dress-coats, and silken stockings,
Cuffs of starched and courtly whiteness,
Civil speeches, sleek embraces —
Throbbed but hearts through your politeness!

2

Hearts within your laundered bosoms,
Love, warm love, those hearts to impassion,
Ah! ye kill me with your whining
Amorous pains in feignèd fashion.

3

I will climb the rugged mountains,
Where the wayside shrines stand fameless,
Where the breast may freely open,
Where free winds blow keen and tameless.

4

I will climb the rugged mountains,
Where the spruce waves grand and gloomy,
Streams shall murmur, wild birds warble,
Under coursing clouds, unto me.

5

Fare ye well, ye polished *salons*!
Polished squires and dames, I shun you!
I will climb the rugged mountains,
Laughingly look down upon you.

A Mountain Idyll

I

1

ON the mountain stands a cabin,
Where there dwells a Miner old;
There the unfading spruces whisper,
And the moon gleams bright as gold.

2

In the cabin stands a settle,
Carven quaintly, curiously;
Who upon it sits is happy,
And that happy man am I.

3

On the footstool sits a Maiden,
O'er my knees her arm she throws;
Eyes like twin blue stars of heaven,
Little mouth a crimson rose.

4

And the dear blue stars gaze on me,
Wide and sweet as heaven come close;
Roguishly her lily finger
Lays she on the crimson rose.

5

No! the Mother does not heed us,
Spinning, spinning late and soon,
And the Father plays the zither,
Crooning o'er some old-world tune.

6

And the Young One softly whispers,
Softly, and with bated breath,
Trusting many a weighty secret
Unto only me, she saith.

7

'Since aunt died,' she tells me, 'never
Have we gone, no more can go,
To the Rifle-range at Goslar,
That 's the jolliest place I know.

8

'While up here 'tis—oh, so lonely!
On this chilly mountain height,
And we seem the livelong Winter
In the snow-drifts buried quite.

9

'Never girl so lived in terror,
I'm as frightened as a child,
For the wicked mountain spirits
Work by night their witchcraft wild.'

10

Then she pauses, on a sudden
Mute, my darling little Maid;
With both hands her eyes she covers,
As by her own words affrayed.

11

Louder moans the spruce outside there,
And the wheel still whirs and brums,
While between rings out the zither,
And the old tune the Father hums:

12

'Fear not thou, my child, my darling,
Fear no evil spirit's power!
Day and night, my child, my darling,
Angels guard thee, hour by hour!'

II

1

LIGHTLY on the lowly casement
Taps the spruce with fingers green,
While the Moon, a mute eavesdropper,
Sheds her golden rays between.

2

Father, Mother, gently snoring,
In their room soft concert make;
While we two with happy prattle
Keep each other wide awake.

3

'That you pray one bit too often
I can hardly think that same,
For your lip curls in a fashion
That from praying never came.

4

'Oh, that curl, so cold and wicked,
Every time it shocks me so!
Though your eyes' good-natured shining
Charms away the gloomy woe.

5

'Then about your faith I'm doubtful,
What is held true faith by most,—
Don't you, really though, believe in
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost?'

6

'Ah! my child, while yet I nestled
In my mother's lap and love,
I believed in God the Father,
Good and great, who reigns above!

7

'Who this goodly world created,
And the goodly folk thereon,
Sun and moon, and stars set spinning
Their predestined course upon.

8

'Then, my child, as I grew bigger,
Things I mastered, more than one,
I began to use my reason,
And believed in God the Son;

9

'On the Son beloved, who, loving,
Love revealed, with us to abide,
And for guerdon, 'tis its custom,
By the world was crucified.

10

'Now that I have grown to manhood,
Read and travelled more than most,
Swells my heart, and I acknowledge
With whole heart the Holy Ghost.

11

'He hath wrought the mightiest marvels,
Mightier works for suffering folk;
He cast down the baron's stronghold,
Burst for aye the villein's yoke.

12

'Old and deadly wounds He healeth,
And restores the ancient right;
All mankind are born His nobles,
All are equal in His sight.

13

'Mists of evil scares He from us,
Fancies dark on brains that prey,
Sickening us of love and gladness,
Grinning at us night and day.

14

'Thousand knights in shining armour,
Of the Holy Ghost inspired,
Chosen His will to do in all things,
With great courage hath he fired.

15

'Now their blessed swords are flaming,
Now their kindly banners wave!
O, my child, dost long to see them,
Knights so noble and so brave?

16

'Well, my child, come—look upon me,
Kiss me, boldly look, and boast
Thou hast looked on such a champion,
Knight, child, of the Holy Ghost.'

III

1

STILL the moon outside the window
Lurks behind the unfading pine,
And our tiny lamp within-door
Flickers low with fitful shine.

2

Yet my twin blue eyes are mingling
With the dawn their brightest rays,
Glowing too the crimson roses,
And the gentle Maiden says :

3

'Tiny fairies, little elf-men,
Steal our bacon and our bread,
Left at evening in the cupboard,
In the morning, not a shred !

4

'Tiny fairies from the milk-pan
Skim our cream, skim off the best,
And the milk-pan leave uncovered,
And the cat laps up the rest.

5

'And the cat's a witch, I'm certain,
For she slinks on stormy nights
Off to yonder haunted mountain,
And the old ruin on the heights.

6

'There stood once a lordly castle,
Full of mirth and armour's flare;
Shining knights and squires and ladies
Flung through many a torch-dance there.

7

'Then on castle and retainers
Laid her curse a wicked witch,
Nothing 's left of it but ruins,
Owls have nests in every niche.

8

'But my aunt in heaven has told me:
If one speak the Word of Power,
In the fated place up yonder,
In the night, at fated hour,

9

'Swift the ruins change to a castle,
Lights a-shine at every loop,
And once more to merry dances
Knights and squires and ladies troop.

10

'And who speaks that Word of Power,
Castle, vassals, his must be,
Drums, and trumpets blown, do homage
To his new-born seignory.'

11

Thus there bloom fantastic folk-tales
From the rosebud mouth so small,
And the eyes their azure starlight
Shed divinely over all.

12

Then the child with golden ringlets
Winds my hands, to bind me fast,
Pretty names she gives my fingers,
Kisses, laughs, is mute at last.

13

And in that still chamber all things
Look on me like friends of yore;
Table, press, I seem to have seen them
Half a hundred times before.

14

Grave and friendly chats the house-clock,
And, the ear scarce catches it,
Of itself the zither tinkles,
And as in a dream I sit.

15

Here 's the fated place for certain,
And 'tis now the fated hour,
And methinks I feel it gliding
From my lips, the Word of Power.

16

See, my child, how night already
Feels the quickening dawn and quakes!
Brook and spruces murmur louder,
And the hoary mountain wakes.

17

Clang of zithers, songs of kobolds
From the mountain glen resound,
And, as in a madding Springtime,
Sprouts a grove of flowers around;—

18

Flowers of magic, boldly springing,
Leaves more huge than fable saith,
Bright and odorous, swiftly trembling
To the gale of passion's breath.

19

Roses, wild as crimson flamelets,
From the coil flash suddenly;
Lilies, fair as crystal columns,
Shoot aloft into the sky.

20

And the stars, like suns for glory,
Gaze from heaven with longing glow;
Into giant cups of lilies
Bright their streams of radiance flow.

21

But ourselves, my gentle Maiden,
Are transfigured more tenfold;
All about us gleam the torches,
Shimmering gay on silk and gold.

22

Thou thyself art grown a princess,
And this hut, as round I glance,
Turns a castle—lo! where gaily
Knights and squires and ladies dance!

23

And for me, I have been seized of
All things, castle, vassals—thee;
Drums, and trumpets blown, do homage
To my new-born seignory!

The Herd-boy

1

HE 'S a King, the happy herd-boy,
For his throne this grassy down;
O'er his head the sun in heaven
Grandly shines, his golden crown.

2

Sheep about his feet are lying,
Flatterers meek, with crosses red;
Calves, his cavaliers, go straddling
O'er the meads with martial tread.

3

And the kids are the court-players,
  Birds and cows, that lull the day
With their flutes and tinkling neck-bells,
  Are his chamber-orchestra.

4

And they ring and sing so sweetly,
  And the while so sweetly sound
Waterfall and murmuring spruces,
  That the King lies slumber-bound.

5

And his faithful dog must govern,
  As his minister, the while,
Whose incessant angry barking
  Echoes round for many a mile.

6

Drowsily the young King murmurs:
  'Ah! to rule is heavy care;
Would that in my cosy palace
  With my Queen at home I were!

7

'In her arms, upon her bosom,
  Soft my head's tired kingship lies,
And I find my boundless kingdom
  Deep within her gentle eyes.'

On the Brocken

1

NOW the eastern sky grows brighter,
In the sun's first glimmer paling,
Far and wide the mountain-ridges
In a sea of cloud are sailing.

2

Over yonder mountain-ridges,
Were my seven-league boots but by me,
To the house of my Belov'd One
Swifter than the wind I'd hie me.

3

From the cot whereon she slumbers
I would softly draw the curtain,
Softly would I kiss her forehead,
And her ruby lips for certain.

4

And yet softer would I whisper
In her ear, the lily's brother,
'Dream that still we're happy lovers,
Never, never lost each other.'

Ilse

1

I AM the Princess Ilse,
I dwell in Ilsenstein ;
Come with me to my castle,
Great bliss shall be mine and thine.

2

Thy head with crystal water
From my clear wells I'll wet
Thou sorrow-sick, pale companion,
Thy cares thou wilt all forget !

3

In my white arms I'll fold thee,
Upon my own white breast,
Of magic joys of old legend
A-dreaming, thou shalt rest.

4

I'll kiss thee and caress thee,
As once I kissed and caressed
My much-loved Kaiser Heinrich,
Who now lies dead in chest.

5

The dead stay dead, and wake not,
The living they live alone ;
And I am fair and blooming,
And laughing my heart beats on.

6

Come down with me to my castle,
My castle with crystal keep;
There dance the knights and the maidens,
The varlets lustily leap.

7

The silken trains they rustle,
The iron spurs they ring,
The dwarfs are fiddling and drumming,
Horn-blowing and trumpeting.

8

But thee, my arm shall cling round thee,
As round my Kaiser it clung;
I stopped his ears with my fingers
From the stern trumpet's tongue.

On the Hardenberg

1

RISE again, ye dreams of old-time,
Open thou, gate of my heart!
Songtide raptures, tears of sadness,
Gushing unaware, outstart.

2

I will wander through the pine-wood,
Where the lusty freshet springs,
Where the stately stag is roaming,
Where the friendly throstle sings.

3

I will climb the rugged mountain,
Scale the steep and craggy height,
Where the castle, grey in ruin,
Stands in dewy morning light.

4

There I'll sit me down in silence,
Brooding o'er the days of old,
Blooming, fading generations
And their splendour, low in mould.

5

Grass to-day o'ergrows the tiltyard,
Where some doughty champion
Fought the boldest and o'ercame them,
And the prize of battle won.

6

Ivy ramps o'er the balcóny
Once where stood the beauteous dame,
Who the valiant overcomer
With her lustrous eyes o'ercame.

7

Ah! on victor and on victress
Death has laid victorious hand;
That grim knight, the lean scythe-bearer,
Smites us all into the sand.

THE NORTH SEA

1825-1826

FIRST CYCLE

I

Coronation

HO Songs! My own good songs and trusty!
Up, up! and don your arms!
Let blow the merry bugles,
And lift upon my shield
This fair young Maiden,
Who now alone shall rule
O'er all my heart as rightful Queen.

Hail, hail to thee, my fair young Queen!

From the sun above thee
I'll snatch the beaming fiery gold,
And from it weave a diadem
For thine anointed head.
From the fluttering silk of the heavens' blue curtain,
Wherein the jewels of night are gleaming,
I'll cut the richest piece,
And this, for coronation-mantle,
I'll hang upon thy royal shoulder.
I'll give thee a royal household

Of sonnets in starch and buckram,
Haughty terzains and courtierlike stanzas ;
As running footman take my Wit,
As Court-fool, my Imagination,
As Herald, with laughing tears for his bearing,
My Humour will serve thee well.
But I myself, your Majesty,
I humbly kneel before you,
Presenting on crimson velvet cushion,
With my homage profound,
That morsel of sense
Which of her mercy she has left me still—
Your predecessor in the realm.

II

Evening Twilight

ON the wan sea-strand
Lonely I lay, and in sorrowful brooding.
The sun sank lower and lower, and flung
His red rays, glowing, on the water,
And I watched the far white billows,
In the grip of the flood,
Foaming and roaring, nigher and nigher—
Strange medley of sounds ! a whispering and wailing,
A laughing and murmuring, sobbing and sighing,
Low voices, the while, a strange lullaby singing.
Methought I heard long-forgotten legends,
World-old adorable folk-tales,

That long since in boyhood
From neighbours' children I learnt;
When, of a summer evening,
On the steps of stone by the house-door,
We squatted for quiet story-telling,
With small hearts eagerly listening
And young eyes keen for wonders;
While the fair grown-up maidens
Sat, mid balm-breathing pots of flowers,
At a window over the way there,
With rosy faces,
Smiling and lit by the moon.

III

Sunset

THE red and glowing Sun goes down,
Down into yon far-shuddering sea,
A world of waters, silver grey;
Airy cloudlets tinted rosily
After him float; while, o'er against him,
From Autumn's duskily-looming cloud-veils
With sorrowful death-pale visage,
Breaks the gentle Moon,
And after her, tiny sparklers,
Shimmer the Stars out of space.

Once through heaven went shining,
Wedded and one,
Luna the Goddess, and Sol the God,

And the Stars in multitudes thronged around them,
Their little, innocent children.

But evil tongues came whispering discord,
And parted in anger
The august and radiant wedded pair.

Now, in lonely splendour, by day
The Sun-god on high goes his ancient round,
Still, for his majesty,
Blandly worshipt, and much belauded
By proud and fortune-hardened worldlings.
But all night long
Through heaven wanders Luna,
The wretched mother,
With all her orphans, her starry children,
And she gleams in silent sorrow,
And love-lorn maidens, and gentle poets
Vow to her tears and songs.

Ah, tender Luna! with woman's heart
Ever she dotes on her beautiful spouse,
Still at even, trembling and pale,
Forth will she peer from her veil of cloud,
And after him aching she gazes,
And fain in her anguish would cry to him: 'Come!
Come! The children are pining for thee——'
Naught the implacable Sun-god heeds,
At the sight of his consort he flushes
His luridest crimson,
In wrath and pain;

And unrelenting he hastens down
To his widower's bed in the sea-waves cold.

* * *

Evil tongues with a whisper
Thus brought down such ruin and sorrow
Even on the gods, the Immortals!
And the wretched gods, high-moving in heaven,
Wander in anguish
Comfortless ways without ending,
And die can they never,
But still drag with them
Their radiant sorrow.

But I, a mere man,
So lowly planted, of Death so favoured,
I'll whine here no longer.

IV

A Night by the Strand

STARLESS and cold is the night,
Wide yawns the sea,
And over the sea, flat on his paunch,
Sprawls that uncouth lubber, the Northwind,
And, quite at his ease, with hoarse, piping voice,
Like a peevish curmudgeon who grows good-humoured,
Chats to the water below;
And he spins mad yarns without number,
Slaughter-breathing tales of giants,
World-old Norwegian sagas;

And between-whiles, far-bellowing, laughs he, and
howls he
The magic songs of the Edda,
And runic-spell rhymes,
So darkly defiant, and potent in glamour,
That the white sea-children
Leap their highest and cheer him,
Drunk with insolent glee.

Meanwhile, on the shore's flat margin,
Over the tide-washed, surf-wetted sand,
Strides a Stranger, the heart within him
A wilder thing than wind or billows.
Where his feet fall
Sparks fly out, and crackle the sea-shells;
And he wraps him close in his mist-grey mantle,
And swiftly strides through the blustering night;
Surely led by the little candle
That pleasantly luring glimmers
From the fisherman's lonely cabin.

Father and brother are on the sea,
And all alone by herself is left
In the cabin the fisherman's daughter,
The strangely beautiful fisherman's daughter.
By the hearth she sits,
And lists to the humming kettle's
Bodeful, sweet, mysterious murmur;
And feeds the fire with sharp-crackling brushwood,
And blows it up,
Till the flickering ruddy blazes

Gleam again with magic beauty
On the face fresh and blooming,
On the tender, fair young shoulder,
So winsomely peeping
From the smock of coarse grey homespun,
And on the careful neat little hand,
As it binds the petticoat-skirt more tightly
Round her shapely haunches.

But on a sudden the door springs wide,
And at once walks in the night-wandering Stranger;
Bold with love his eye reposes
On the fair and slender maiden,
Who trembling before him stands,
Aghast, like a terrified lily;
And he flings on the floor his mantle,
And laughs, and says:

'Behold, my child, I keep my word,
For I come, and with me there comes
The good old time when the gods out of heaven
Stooped in love to the daughters of men,
And, the daughters of men embracing,
Begot upon them
Kings, and races of sceptre-bearers,
And heroes famous on earth.
But gape there, my child, no longer
Over my godliness,
And I beg of thee brew me some tea with rum;
For outside 'twas cold,
And in such a night-wind,

Gods though we be, eternal, we shiver,
And easily catch the godliest of snuffles,
And even a cough that 's immortal.

V

Poseidon.

THE sun's bright beams were playing
Over the rolling waste of the sea ;
Far in the roadstead glittered the ship
That waited there to bear me homeward ;
Only the waft of a fair wind failed us,
And I sat in peace on a silver sand-hill
On the lonely strand.
And I read the Song of Odysseus,
That old, that ever-youthful song,
From out whose leaves, where ocean murmured,
There joyously breathed on me
The breath of the gods,
And the sunny Springtime of mortals,
And the burgeoning heaven of Hellas.

My noble heart still faithfully followed
The Son of Laertes in wandering and danger,
Sat beside him, heavy in spirit,
By friendly hearth-sides,
Where Queens were spinning purple linen ;
And helped him to lie, and craftily vanish
From giants' caverns, and arms of sea-nymphs ;
Followed him down through Cimmerian night,

And through storm and shipwreck,
Still suffering with him unspeakable sorrow.

Sighing I spoke : ' O cruel Poseidon,
Thy wrath is dreadful !
For myself I fear
In my homeward sailing.'

The words were scarce spoken,
When up foamed the sea,
And from the white-capt waves arose,
With sedge-crowned brows, the head of the Sea-god,
In scorn he bellowed :
' Keep a bold heart, my bardling !
I care not in the least to endanger
Thy wretched smack there,
Nor make thy life, so precious, a burden
With even a redoubtable tossing ;
For thee, my bardling, I owe thee no grudge,
Thou never didst damage the tiniest turret
In Priam's citadel holy ;
No tiniest eyelash didst thou e'er singe
In the eye of my son Polyphemus,
And thee hath never counselled and kept
The Goddess of Prudence, Pallas Athena.'

Thus roared Poseidon,
And into the sea plunged back ;
While, over his vulgar sailor's joke,
Laughed under the water
Amphitrite, the buxom fishwife,
And the stupid Daughters of Nereus.

VI

Declaration

DUSKILY fell the evening twilight,
Wilder blustered the tide,
And I sat on the shore, and gazed upon
The white dance of the billows,
And then my breast upswelled like the sea,
And longing seized me, and deep home-sickness
For thee, thou Image sweet,
That hoverest ever o'er me,
Dost call me everywhere,
Everywhere, everywhere,
In the snore of the wind, in the roar of the sea,
In the sigh of my own fond heart.

With fragile reed I wrote in the sand:
'Agnes, I love but thee!'
But cruel billows came pouring in
Over the tender confession,
And blotted it out.
O brittlest of reeds, O sand so unstable,
O treacherous billows, I'll trust you no more!
The heavens grow darker, my heart grows wilder,
And with strong right hand, from Norway's forests,
I pluck the tallest fir-tree,
And plunging it deep
Into Etna's glowing crater, and wielding

This for my fire-steeped pen titanic,
Write on the gloomy vault of heaven :
' Agnes, I love but thee ! '

Night after night, blazing on high,
Shall burn the unquenchable scripture of flame,
And myriads to come, earth's unborn generations,
Read, rejoicing, the heavenly motto :
' Agnes, I love but thee ! '

VII

A Night in the Cabin

THE sea hath its pearls for treasure,
The heavens their starry jewels,
But ah ! my heart, my heart,
My heart hath its own love.

Great are the sea and the heavens,
But greater is my heart,
And fairer than pearls or starlets
Beameth and gleameth my love.

Thou young and slender Maiden,
Come to my mighty heart ;
My heart, and the sea, and the heavens
Are dying for utter love.

* * *

On the dark blue vault of heaven,
Where the loveliest stars are twinkling,
Oh, that I might press my kisses,
Wildly press with stormy weeping!

Those bright stars in thousands twinkling
Are the eyes of my Belovèd,
Thousandfold their tender greeting
Shines from the blue vault of heaven.

To the dark blue vault of heaven,
To the eyes of my Belovèd,
I uplift my arms devoutly,
And beseech them and implore them:

Sweetest eyes, ye gracious candles,
Oh, possess my soul with blessing,
Let my spirit fly to inherit
You and your whole heaven of blisses!

* * *

From the eyes of heaven up yonder
Golden sparks fall trembling downward,
Through the night, as Love my spirit
Fills, expands through boundless heaven.

O ye eyes of heaven up yonder,
Weep yourselves into my spirit,
Till your starry tears with radiance
Flood and overflow my spirit!

* * *

Gently rocked by ocean-billows
And the tides of dreamy musing,
I lie quiet in the cabin,
In my dark berth in the corner.

Through the open hatchway gazing,
Bright I see the stars up yonder,
The belov'd sweet eyes in heaven
Of my sweet, my Well-Belovèd.

Those belov'd sweet eyes in heaven,
O'er my head their watch are keeping,
And they glimmer and they shimmer
From the dark blue vault of heaven.

Toward the dark blue vault of heaven
Blissfully I gaze long hours,
Till a wan white veil of sea-mist
Hides me from those eyes belovèd.

* * *

On the vessel's thin planking,
Where my dream-haunted head lies,
Batter the billows, the boisterous billows;
They welter and murmur
Aside in my ear:
'Thou dream-befooled fellow!
Thy arm is short, and the heavens are far,
And the stars up yonder are firmly fastened
With golden rivets,—

In vain is thy longing, in vain is thy sighing,
'Twere better for thee to go to sleep.'

* * *

In dreams I saw a moorland vast and dreary,
All muffled thick with white and silent snow,
And under the white snow I lay deep-buried,
And slept the cold and lonely sleep of death.

But from the gloomy heaven above looked ever
The starry eyes upon my grave below,
Those gentle eyes! From heaven they shone victorious,
And calmly bright, and ever full of love.

VIII

Storm

LOUD rages the Storm,
And he flogs the billows,
And the billows, foaming and combing,
Tower aloft, and in white water-mountains
Heave restless, for ever restless;
And the good ship upclimbs them,
Eagerly toiling;
Then, suddenly plunging, she sounds
The gloomy waves' wide-yawning abysses.

O Sea!
Mother of Beauty, the foam-born cruel one!
Grandmother of Love, have mercy upon me!

There comes hovering, scenting corpses,
That white apparition, the sea-mew;
And, whetting her beak on the topmast,
She lusts with greedy lust for the heart
That with praise of thy Daughter resounds,
And which thy Grandson, the little rogue,
Hath chosen for toy.

In vain are my pleading and prayer!
My call dies away in the rage of the storm,
In the noise of winds warring.
They howl, and whistle, and prattle, and roar,
Like a madhouse of sounds!
And in the lulls I hear distinctly
Siren wailing of harp-strings,
Wildest yearning of song,
Soul-dissolving and soul-lacerating;
Surely that voice I remember!

Far on the rocky coast of Scotland
Looms a castle, jutting and beetling
Grey o'er the shattering surge;
There, at a deep high-vaulted window,
Stands a woman, sickly and fair,
Ghostly fragile, and marble-pale;
And she sweeps her harp as she sings,
And the rough wind raves through her long locks
rudely,
And bears her gloomy song
Over the raging waste of the sea.

IX

Calm

1

CALM the ocean lies, the sunbeams
Shimmering, dancing on the water,
And the ship through heaving jewels
Gently cleaves her green sea-furrow.

2

By the tiller lies the Pilot
On his belly, gently snoring.
Patching sails beside the foremast,
Cross-legged, squats the tarry Ship-boy.

3

Red his cheeks beneath their griming
Burn ; his wide mouth sadly twitches,
And his beautiful big eyes are
Piteously o'erbrimmed with sorrow.

4

For the Skipper stands before him,
Raging, swearing, roaring : ' Curse you,
You young rogue, you've been and robbed me,
From the cask you've stol'n a herring ! '

5

Calm the ocean! From the ground-swell
Boldly leaps a smart young spratling,
Warms his little head in sunshine,
Glad with tiny tail he splashes.

6

But from airy height a sea-gull
Darts like lightning on the spratling,
And, his hasty prey half-swallowed,
Soars again into the azure.

X

Ocean-Wraith

BUT I, the while, leant over the gunwale,
With rapt eyes dreamily gazing,
Far down through the water clear as crystal,
Still gazing deeper and deeper—
Till, deep in the sea's abysses,
First like a glimmering dawn-cloud,
But ever growing clearer in colour,
Domes of churches and towers loomed upward;
And soon, as clear as day, a city entire,
Antiquated, Netherlandish,
And busy with folk.

There solemn burghers in sable mantles,
With prim white neck-ruffs and chains of honour,
And long in sword, and long in the visage,
Gravely stride through the swarming market
Tow'rd the Town Hall, high of stairway,
Where Emperors, marble phantoms,
Guard are keeping with sceptre and sword.
And near them, before long rows of houses,
With windows a-gleam like mirrors,
And quaint pyramidal pollard lindens,
Maidens walk with rustling of satin,
Slender-waisted, their flower-like faces
Framed demurely in coifs black-bordered,
Their golden tresses outrippling.
Gay attired gallants, in Spanish costume
Come swaggering to meet them, and bowing.
Aged women,
In sober old-fashioned garments,
With hymn-book and rosary in their hands,
Haste, with faltering footsteps,
To the great cathedral,
Impelled by the carillon's pealing
And muttering organ's tone.

Me too that far-off music grips
With its mysterious shudder!
An infinite longing, deepest sorrow
O'ersteals my heart,
My scarcely healèd heart;—
I feel as though its wounds were gently
Kissed open by belovèd lips,

And set once more a-bleeding,—
Blood-drops, warm and crimson,
Fall slowly, slowly dripping fall
On a grey old house below there,
In the deep sea-city,
On an old and steeply-gabled house,
Tenantless now, and melancholy;
Save at the basement window
A maiden sits,
And leans her head on her arm,
Like a poor and forsaken child—
And I know thee, thou poor forsaken child!

So deep, so ocean-deep, then,
Thou hiddest thyself from me
In childish ill-humour,
And ne'er couldst again come up,
But strange must dwell in a land of strangers,
These centuries long;
And all the while, with soul full of grief,
O'er the whole wide world have I sought thee,
For ever have sought thee,
Thou ever-Belov'd One,
Thou long, long lost one!
But now I have found thee—
Ay, now I have found thee again, and gaze in
Thy own sweet face,
Those eyes, so grave and loyal,
That smile so tender—
And never, never again will I leave thee,
And I come to thee, down to *thee*.

And with arms outstretched to enfold thee
Down will I plunge to thy heart!

Just in the nick of time here
The wideawake skipper gripped my foot,
And pulled me back from the bulwark,
And cried, maliciously laughing:
'Devil come for you, Doctor?'

XI

Purification

BIDE thou in thine own deeps of ocean,
Delirious dream,
Thou who once for many a night
Didst wring my heart with bliss deceiving,
And now, as Ocean-Wraith,
In day's clear light hast come to ensnare me—
Bide thou below there for evermore;
And I fling, moreover, down to thee
All my old sins and my sorrows;
And the cap and bells of my folly,
That so long round my head have jingled;
And the cold, sleek-glistening serpent-skin,
Hypocrisy,
That all too long my spirit strangled,
The sickly spirit,
The God-belying, the angel-belying,
Unholy spirit—

Yoho! yoho! Here comes a breeze!
Up with the sails! They flutter and fill!
O'er the calm treacherous plains of ocean
Speeds the good ship,
And 'Hurrah!' cries the soul set free.

XII

Peace

HIGH in heaven the sun was riding,
Round him white billowy clouds.
The sea was calm,
And musing I lay in the stern of the vessel,
Dreamily musing—and, half in waking
And half in slumber, I saw the Christ,
The Saviour of men.
In white and flowing raiment
He walked, a giant shape,
Over land and sea;
His head rose high into heaven,
His hands he stretched as in blessing
Over land and sea;
While, for the heart in his breast,
The sun he carried,
The golden fire-flaming sun;
And his golden fire-flaming sun-heart
Poured forth its beams of mercy,

And its kindly all-fostering light,
Illuming and warming,
Over land and sea.

Peals of bells rang, drawing festally,
As though swans with wreaths of roses
Towed her onward, the swift-gliding ship,
And drew her in play to the shore's green places,
Whereby men dwelt in their lofty-steepled
Sky-scaling town.

O peace mysterious! How still the town!
At rest were the rumble and roar
Of trade, with its chaffer and swelter;
And through the clean and echoing alleys
Wandered the townsfolk, clothed in white raiment,
Palm-branches bearing.
And where two met, with sympathy
Each looked on each, and read his bosom,
And, trembling for love and sweet self-abnegation,
Each on his brow kissed the other,
Uplifting their eyes
To the sun-bright heart of the Saviour,
That shed from the heavens his crimson blood
In glad atonement;
Then, thrice-redeemed, they cried aloud:
'Blessed be Jesus Christ!'

SECOND CYCLE

I

Greeting to the Sea

THALATTA! Thalatta!
I hail thee, O Sea, thou Ancient of Days!
I hail thee, O Sea, ten thousand times
With jubilant heart,
Of yore as once hailed thee
Those Grecian hearts ten thousand,
Homestead-desiring, calamity-mastering,
World-renowned bold Grecian hearts.

The billows were heaving,
Were heaving and roaring,
The sun shed briskly from heaven
His quivering rosy sparklets,
In sudden scare the tribes of sea-birds
Rose on the wing, loud-shrieking;
O'er stamping of war-steeds and clang of shields smitten,
Far-pealed that shout, like a victor's cry:
'*Thalatta! Thalatta!*'

I hail thee, O Sea, thou Ancient of Days!
Like speech of my homestead murmurs thy water,
Like dreams of my childhood shimmer before me

The heaving leagues of thy billowy realm,
As Memory, the grey-beard, remurmurs his stories
Of all those dear magnificent playthings,
Of all those glittering Christmas-presents,
Of all those branchy red trees of coral,
Gold-fishes, pearls, and shimmering sea-shells,
Which thou mysteriously dost guard
Down there in thy lucid crystal house.

Oh, how long have I languished in lonely exile!
Like a poor fading flow'ret
Shut in a botanist's tin for collecting
Drooped the sick heart in my breast.
Meseems I've sat the livelong Winter,
A sick man alone in his gloomy sick-room,
And now have suddenly left it;
And blindingly flashes upon me
The emerald Spring by the sun awakened,
And the trees are a-whisper with snowy blossom,
And the fair young flowers gaze in my face,
Their bright eyes brimming with sweetness;
All 's odour and hum, and laughter and breeze,
And in heaven's blue deep the birds are all singing—
Thalatta! Thalatta!

Thou valiant homing heart,
How oft, how bitter oft,
The Northern She-Barbarians have beset thee!
From great eyes, roving for conquest,
Shooting their fiery arrows;
With words ground crooked like sabres,

Threatening still to cleave my bosom ;
With letters like clubs they battered to bits
My feeble and stupified brain—
In vain I braced my buckler against them,
The shafts flew hissing, the blows fell crashing,
And by the Northern She-Barbarians
Down was I driven to the sea—
And, breathing freely, I hail thee, O Sea,
Thou kindly, rescuing sea,
Thalatta ! Thalatta !

II

Thunderstorm

DULL tempest lies prone on the ocean,
And through the lurid wall of cloud
Darts the lightning with zigzag flare,
Swift-illuming, and swiftly vanished,
As a gleek from the brain of Kronion.
Over the waste of weltering water
Far the thunders go rolling,
And lustily leap the white sea-horses
That Boreas once in his might
Sired on the alluring mares of Erichthōn ;
And the sea-fowl anxiously o'er them hover,
Like shades that flit by the Styx,
Whom Charon repels from the night-coloured barge.

Woeful pinnace of pleasure,
Which there goes dancing the direst dance!
Aeolus sends her the briskest of partners,
Who strike up madly a rollicking round-dance,
And one doth pipe, and one doth blow,
A third on double-bass keeps brumming,
And the tottering steersman grips the tiller,
And with fixed eye looks down on his compass,
The shuddering soul of the vessel,
Then lifts his hands imploring to heaven:
'O succour me, Castor, Tamer of Steeds,
And thou, valiant with fists, Polydeuces!'

III

Shipwreck

HOPE gone, and Love gone! All dashed to pieces!
And myself—most like a drown'd body
That grumblingly the sea hath cast up,
Lie on the strand here,
The bald and desolate strand.
There heaves before me the waste of waters,
Nothing behind me but trouble and sorrow,
And over my head hurry the rain-clouds;
The grey and formless Daughters of Air,
Who from the sea, in cloudy pitchers,
Draw up the water,
And with labour lift it, and lift it,

But to pour it again in the sea,
A dull and most wearisome task,
And useless as my own vain life is.

The waves are murmuring, the sea-gulls crying,
Wafts of old memories over me steal,
Old dreams long forgotten, old visions long vanished,
Sweet and torturing, rise from the deep.

A woman dwells in the Norland,
A fairest woman, royally fair.
The amorous white folds of her gown
Clasp close her slender cypress-like form ;
The dark wealth of her tresses
Falls, like a night of bliss,
From her head, with its garland of plaits, down-flowing
To curl itself dreamily sweet
Round a face sweet in its paleness ;
And from that face, sweet in its paleness,
Large and intense her dark eye flashes,
Like a black sun from heaven.

O thou swarthy sun, how oft,
Witchingly oft, I drank from thee
The flames of a madness ecstatic,
And stood and reeled, as one drunk with fire—
Then hovered a smile of dovelike mildness
O'er the proud lips, ripe in their haughty curving,
And the proud lips, ripe in their haughty curving,
Sighed forth words more sweet than moonlight,
And tender as breath of roses—

And then my soul shook its pinions,
And soared, like an eagle, aloft into heaven!

Hush! ye billows and sea-fowl!
For all is over, hope and good-fortune,
Hope gone and Love gone! On earth I lie lonely,
A desolate shipwrecked man,
And bury my burning face here
In the wet sea-sand.

IV

Sunset

THE Sun in glory
Has paced serenely into the sea,
The wavering waters are softly tinged
With the gloom of night;
Yet still the afterglow
Strews them over with golden spangles;
And the might of the murmuring tide
Shoreward urges the white-capt billows,
That gambol as briskly and blithely
As woolly white flocks of lambkins,
At even, when, singing, the herd-boy drives them
From pasture home.

'How glorious the sun is!'
So said, long silence breaking, the Friend

With whom o'er the strand I was wandering;
And half in jest, half in sad earnest,
Assured me he held the Sun to be
A beautiful woman the hoary Sea-god
Had married for mere convenience;
The livelong day she wanders in gladness
The heights of heaven, her purple robe
Ablaze with diamonds flashing,
Of all admired, of all belovèd—
All the wide world's fair creatures,
And gladdening all the world's fair creatures
With her bright face's warmth and radiance;
But in the evening, desolate, helpless,
Back must she come, like a slave,
To the damp sea-hall, and barren embraces,
Of her hoary spouse.

'Trust me'—further my Friend went on,
And laughed and sighed, and again laughed drily—
'They live down below there in tenderest wedlock!
For either they sleep, or wrangle so savagely
The sea above them foams with the strife,
And mid roaring of billows the sailor hears
How the Greybeard miscalls his Dame:
"All creation's bold strumpet!
Wanton of radiance!
The livelong day for others thou glowest,
At night for me thou art frosty and jaded!"
And after such curtain-lectures,
What wonder? into passionate weeping
The proud Sun breaks, and bewails her fortune,

And wails so bitterly long, the Sea-god
Springs from his couch there in sheer desperation,
And swiftly swims up to the sea's broad surface,
His wits and his wind to recover.

'I saw him myself, 'twas only last night,
Peering, breast-high, above the billows.
A jacket of yellow flannel he wore,
And on his head a lily-white nightcap,
And wrinkled and sere was his face.'

V

The Song of the Oceanids

PALLOR of evening blanches the sea,
And lonely there, with his soul so lonely,
Sits a man on the bald sea-strand,
And stares with death-cold gaze aloft
At the far-off death-cold vault of heaven;
And stares o'er the waste of weltering sea—
Airy sailors, his sighs go soaring,
And back to him come in sorrow,
For barred to their entrance the heart they have found
Wherein they fain had anchored.
Then so loud he groans that the white-wing'd sea-gulls,
Scared from their sandy nesting-places,
In flocks around him circle,
And he speaks these words to them, strangely laughing:

'Poor, black-leggèd sea-fowl!
On snowy pinions ocean o'erhovering,
With crooked beaks the sea-water sipping,
And train-oily seal-blubber gobbling,
Your life is bitter as is your diet!
But I, happy mortal, I taste but of dainties!
I feed on the sweetest breath of roses,
The brides of the nightingale, fed by the moon;
I feed on yet sweeter confectioner's cates,
Filled full of rich cream thickly-clotted;
And the sweetest sweet I have tasted,
Love, sweet Love, sweet being-belovèd.

'She loves me! she loves me! the sweetest Maiden!
This moment at home, from her balcony leaning,
She looks through the gloaming away down the high-road,
And listens, longing for me—yes, really!
In vain she peers all around her, then sighs she,
And sighing down she goes to the garden,
And wanders in balm and moonlight,
And speaks to the flowers, and fain must tell them
How I, her Belovèd, am oh, so dear!
And so worth her loving—yes, really!
In bed thereafter, asleep, in her dreams,
Her innocence plays with my image dear;
Next morning, even, at breakfast,
In her glistening bread and butter
Spies she my countenance smiling,
And she eats it up for love—yes, really!'

E'en so boasts he, and boasts he,
And ever the sea-gulls' wild screaming
Seems cold and ironical tittering.
The mists of gloaming rise from the sea ;
From opalescent grey cloud looks weirdly,
Peering forth, the wan yellow moon !
Up surge, moaning, the ocean billows,
And deep from the surging and moaning sea,
As mournful as whispering breezes,
Sounds the Song of the Oceanids,
The beautiful, pitiful Water-wives,
And loveliest the voice, o'er the others outringing,
Of Peleus' Consort, the silver-footed,
And they sing to him, sighing :

'O fool, thou fool, thou hectoring fool !
Thou tortured of sorrow !
Thy hopes behind thee lie slaughtered most wretchedly,
Poor babes of the heart fondly dandled,
And ah ! thy heart, like Niobe,
Grows marble through grief !
Black night sinks down o'er thy brain,
And there flash through the gloom the lightnings of madness,
In thy grief-wrung boasting !
O fool, thou fool, thou hectoring fool !
Stiff-neckéd art thou, like thy forbear,
The Titan so haughty who stole from Jove's children
The heavenly fire, and gave it to men,
And plagued by the vulture, nailed to the rock-wall,
Defied Olympus, defying and groaning

Till we could hear in our green sea-deeps,
And came to him with comforting song.
O fool, thou fool, thou hectoring fool!
Thou art in sooth yet feebler than he,
And 'twere mere common sense that the gods thou
shouldst honour,
And patiently bear thy misery's burden,
Ay, patiently bear it for ages and ages,
Till Atlas' self shall his patience lose,
And the heavy world shall pitch from his shoulders
Into endless night.'

So sounded the Song of the Oceanids,
The beautiful, pitiful Water-wives,
Till waves growing louder quite over-roared it—
Into the clouds went plunging the moon,
Night over me yawned,
And I sat long, long, in the darkness weeping.

VI

The Gods of Greece

O MOON in full bloom! in thy soft light
The sea is a-shine like flowing gold;
With noonday clearness, yet glamour of gloaming,
It rests in peace on the strand's broad bosom;
Through the starless azure of heaven,
Huge the white clouds go sailing,
Like forms of gods colossal, moulded
In glimmering marble.

Nay, in good sooth, no clouds are those yonder!
These are themselves, the gods of old Hellas,
Who once in gladness the world o'erlorded;
But now, defunct and supplanted,
Like monstrous ghosts make spectral procession
Through midnight spaces of heaven.

Awed, and mysteriously dazzled, I gaze on
The airy Pantheon,
Dumb-moving, majestic, dreadfully moving,
Giants in stature.
He there is Kronion, the King of Heaven,
Snow-white gleam the curls on his brow,
Those curls so renowned that made tremble Olympus;
And cold in his hand are his thunders extinct,
And in his visage dwell sorrow and care,
Though there sits ever his ancient pride.
Those times were better, far better, O Zeus,
When thou divinely didst gloat on
Fair boys, and fair nymphs, and hecatombs also!
But e'en the gods may not lord it for ever,
The younger still drive out the elder,
As thou thyself o'er thy hoary father,
And over thy Titan uncles usurpedst,
Jupiter Parricida!
Thee too I know, thee too, proud Juno!
In spite of thine anguish of jealous care,
Another the sceptre has won from thy keeping,
And thou art no more the Queen of Heaven,
And thy great ox-eyes have grown dull,
And power from thy lily-white arms has vanished,

And never more thy wrath shall swoop on
The Virgin filled with the godhead,
And the wonder-working strong Son of Zeus.
Thee too, I know thee, Pallas Athena!
With shield and wisdom hadst thou no skill
To turn from the gods this destruction?
Thee too I know, even thee, Aphrodite!
Once the golden, and now the silvern!
But certés the zone of desire still decks thee,
Though creeps my spirit before thy beauty;
And me wouldst thou bless with thy body so fair,
Like other heroes, of dread I should die—
As pale corpse-goddess thou seem'st to me,
Venus Libitina!
No more with love upon thee there
Gazes thy terrible Ares.
How mournfully looks Phoebus Apollo,
The Youthful! Dumb is his lyre
That gladdened the gods at Olympian feasts.
Yet mournfuller looks Hephaistos,
And truly the Limper shall never more
Play the Hebe in heaven,
And serve with zeal to the gods assembled
The genial nectar.—And long is extinguished
The gods' inextinguishable laughter.

Ye gods of Greece, I have never loved you!
For Greeks I hold in distinct aversion,
And even Romans I frankly hate;
Yet sacred compassion and shuddering pity
O'erflow my heart,

When thus I see you there above me,
Ye gods long forsaken,
Dead, night-wandering phantoms,
Weak as clouds that the wind scares by!
And when I bethink me what quaking wind-bags
Are these new gods who have overcome you,
These new sad gods who are now the fashion,
The malice cloaked in the sheepskin of meekness—
Oh, my heart swells with gloomiest rage,
And I would batter the modern temples,
And battle for *you*, ye gods of Hellas,
For you and your genial ambrosial right,
And before your altars majestic,
Rebuilded once more, and a-smoke with sacrifice,
I myself would kneel to you, praying,
And lift to you arms beseeching—

For always, ye old gods of Hellas,
Have ye of old in the battle of mortals
Stood by the side of the conqueror stoutly;
But man is magnanimous rather than ye,
And I stand here now in the battle of gods
Firm on your side, ye old gods, though vanquished.

Thus I spake, and above me visibly
Blushed those pallid and cloudy spectres,
And gazed at me even as the dying,
Transfigured by pain—and suddenly vanished.
The moon just then had hidden
Under the clouds, which drove on her darkly;
Loudly murmured the sea,
And bright paced forth, victorious in heaven,
The stars eternal.

VII

Questions

AT night by the sea, the desolate sea,
Doth a young man stand,
His head full of doubt, his heart full of anguish,
And with livid lips he questions the billows :

'The Riddle of Life, oh, read me,
That world-old tormenting riddle,
O'er which have been addled heads without number,
Heads in strange hieroglyphic bonnets,
Heads in turbans, and barret-caps black,
Heads in perukes, and a thousand other
Plagued and perspiring heads of mortals—
Tell me now the meaning of man !
Whence comes he coming? Where goes he gone?
Who dwells up there in the golden starfields? '

The billows but murmur their murmur eternal,
Still blows the wind, the clouds still go sailing,
The stars go on twinkling, indifferent and cold,
And a fool waits for the answer.

VIII

The Phoenix

THERE comes a bird flown out of the West,
And eastward flies he,
To his home in an eastern garden,
Where groves of spice are breathing and growing,
And palm-trees whisper, and cool springs bubble—
And flying sings the bird of wonder :

'She loves him ! she loves him !
In her little heart she enshrines his picture,
And keeps it sweetly, secretly hidden,
And knows not 'tis there !
But in her dreams he stands before her,
She weeps and implores, and his hand she kisses,
And his name she utters,
And uttering it wakens, and lies affrighted,
And rubs in her wonder her beautiful eyes—
She loves him ! she loves him !'

At the foot of the mast I was leaning on deck,
Where as I stood I could hear the bird's song.
Like dusky green coursers with manes of bright silver,
Tossing their foam-crests, bounded the billows ;
Like swans in flight sailed over the ocean,
With glimmering canvas, the Heligolanders,
The nomads bold of the North Sea !
Over me, in the eternal blue,
Hovered the white-wingèd clouds,
And sparkled the sun eternal,

The rose of the heavens, that blooms so firily,
And laughed on the ocean that mirrored him ;—
And heaven, and sea, and my own swelling heart
Resounded in echo :
'She loves him ! she loves him ! '

IX

Sea-Sickness

THE afternoon clouds droop downward,
Greyly they sag o'er the breast of the sea,
Which heaves to meet them in sullen gloom,
And the ship scuds fast between.

Sea-sick, ever I sit by the mainmast,
And there on myself make reflexions full many,
Primaeval ashen-grey reflexions,
That Father Lot made long ago,
When pleasant things he'd enjoyed too freely,
And found himself after in evil case.
I think, too, sometimes of other old stories :
How pilgrims marked with the cross in the old-time
Devoutly would kiss, in their stormy sea-faring
The Blessed Virgin's comfortful picture ;
How sea-sick knights, in as dire sea-trouble,
Each one the cherished glove of his lady
Would press to his lips, and straight gat comfort—
But here I'm sitting and chewing morosely
An old red-herring, that salty consoler
When you're sick as a cat, and down as a dog.

All the while the good ship fights
With the wild and buffeting tide;
Like a war-horse uprearing poises she now
On her shuddering stern, till the rudder creaks,
Then downward she plunges, heels over head,
Into the bellowing water-gulf;
Anon, as one reckless, faint with love,
Fain would she gently nestle
On the gloomy breast of the giant billow,
That, mightily roaring,
Comes tumbling aboard her, a sea-waterfall,
And drenches myself with foam.

Oh, this heaving, and swaying, and rocking
Is past all bearing!
In vain my eyes go peering to seek
The German coastline. Alas! but water!
For ever but water, unstable water!

As the winter traveller at evening will yearn
For a warm, heart-comforting cup of tea,
So yearns my heart even now for thee,
My German Fatherland!
Though evermore thy pleasant soil be encumbered
With madness, hussars, and wretched verses,
And pamphlets weak and small-beery;
Though evermore thy zebras
On roses go browsing instead of thistles;
Though for evermore thy noble monkeys
So lazily strut in superior splendour,

And think themselves better than all their brothers,
The vulgar herd of dull plodding cattle ;
Though evermore thy worthy Snail-Council
May deem itself immortal,
It creeps along at such a snail-pace,
And day by day will vote on the question :
' Does the cheese to the tribe of the cheesemites belong?'
And consumes long years in profound debate
On modes of improving Egyptian hoggets,
And making their fleeces grow longer,
That the shepherd may shear them just like the others,
No favour shown—
Though for ever injustice and folly
May flourish, Germany, o'er thee,
For thee my bowels are yearning now :
For thou art at least still good firm dry land.

X

In Haven

HAPPY the man who has come to his haven,
And left the sea with its tempests behind him,
And cosy now and quiet sits
In the pleasant Town-cellar at Bremen.

How kindly looks the world, and how cheery
Reflected in this brimming rummer,
And how the billowing *microcosmos*
Sunnily fathoms the thirst of my heart!
All things I see in the glass,
Ancient and modern histories of nations,
Turks and Greeks, and Hegel and Gans,
Groves of lemons, and guards parading,
Berlin and Gotham, and Tunis, and Hamburg;
But fore all else my Belov'd One's image,
That angel's head on its Rhine-wine gold-ground.

Oh, how fair! how fair art thou, Belovèd!
Fair as a Rose thou seemest!
Not like the Rose of Schiras,
The Bride of the Nightingale, Hafiz-besung;
Not like the Rose of Sharon,
Whose holy crimson the Prophets have glorified;—
Thy peer is 'The Rose' in the Cellar of Bremen!
That is the Rose of Roses.

The older she grows the lovelier she blushes,
And her heavenly breath has made me thrice blessèd,
Her breath has inspired me, and made me so drunk,
That gripped he not fast the hair of my head,
Mine Host of the Cellar of Bremen,
I'd turn topsy-turvey !

The honest man ! We sat there together,
And drank like two brothers,
Discoursing on high mysterious matters,
We sighed and sank on each other's bosoms,
And his convert am I to the True Faith,—Charity—
I drank to the health of my bitterest foes,
And all bad poets forgave as freely
As I myself would fain be forgiven.
I wept most devoutly, whereafter
The Gates of Salvation opened to me,
Where the 'Twelve Apostles', the holy big wine-casks,
Preach in silence, yet well comprehended
Of all the nations !

These are heroes !
Uncomely outside in their wooden jackets,
They are within more bright and beautiful
Than all the haughty Priests of the Temple,
And all King Herod's guardsmen and sycophants,
Beprankt with gold, and in purple raiment—
Well, I have always declared
That not among quite common people,
Nay, but the best society going,
Lived for ever the King of Heaven !

Hallelujah! how pleasantly breathe on me
The palm-trees of Beth-El!
How sweetly the myrrh breathes from Hebron!
How rushes Jordan and reels in his gladness!—
And I reel with him now, and reeling
Lugs me from stair unto stair to daylight
Mine excellent Host of the Cellar of Bremen.

Mine excellent Host of the Cellar of Bremen!
Behold, on the roofs of the houses sitting,
The angels, gloriously drunk, and singing;
Yon sun, all aglow up above them,
Is only the jolly red nose of a toper,
The World-Spirit's nose 'tis;
And round the World-Spirit's big red nose there
Circles, reeling, the drunken world.

XI

Epilogue

AS in the cornfields the golden wheat-ears,
So wax and so wave in the spirit of man
Thoughts in thousands.
Ay, but ever the love-thoughts tender
Spring between them like happy corn-flowers,
Blue and scarlet flowers.

Blue and scarlet flowers!
The churl of a reaper rejects you as useless,
Clowns in dull scorn but thresh you to pieces,
And even the neediest vagrant,
Whom the sight of you comforts and cheers,
Shakes his wise pate,
And pretty weeds will call you.
But the fair maid of the village,
Her garland weaving,
Respects you and plucks you,
To twine with you her beauteous tresses;
And decked with you thus, she hastes to the dance-floor,
Where fiddles and flutes are merrily sounding,
Or to the silent beach-tree,
Where the voice of her lover sounds sweeter by far
Than flutes do or fiddles.

OXFORD
PRINTED AT THE CLARENDON PRESS
BY HORACE HART, M.A.
PRINTER TO THE UNIVERSITY

DATE DUE

NOV 2 7 1994			
NOV 2 7 1994			
MAY 1 1 2003			
APR 2 9 2003			

DEMCO 38-297

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY
31197 11907 0586